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Interview
David Crane

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New Games!

RetroReview:
How Have They Aged?
Pitfall - Atari 2600
Ninja Spirit - TurboGrafx 16
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More Inside!

Atari 2600's

Pitfall!

The Creator of Pitfall!, David Crane, Gives The Inside Story On How The Game Came To Life

Monthly Price Guide!

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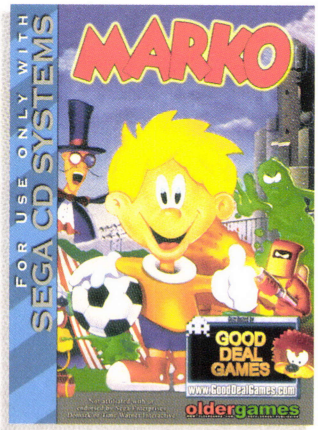

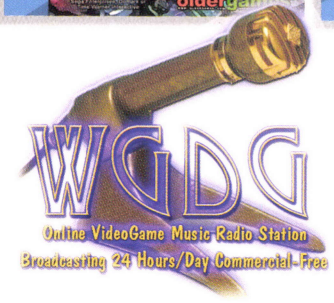

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Edit This

Second Star To The Right

So, here we are... The first issue of Manci Games Magazine. It's been an amazing ride so far, and we haven't even seen this issue published yet! I want to start this mag off right: Thank you subscribers and readers. Without you, we wouldn't even be attempting this. We hope that over time we can mold this magazine into what YOU want it to be.

Issue #1 is our first shot. Our maiden voyage, so to speak. Remember that there will be course adjustments as we traverse the unknown seas of "independent publishing" and "retrogaming magazine." We tried our best to provide something that the editorial staff would like to see in a magazine like this. Now it's up to you to shape it into the perfect magazine. Read Issue #1. Read it twice! Then send us your comments (good and bad) to: feedback@mancigames.com.

That being said, I think we've got a lot of great stuff packed into these pages. We've got a great feature on The Making of Pitfall, RetroReviews of classic games, RetroBrew coverage of the current homebrew scene, articles, columns, and of course, the price guide.

Keep in mind that while you may only hold 40 pages in your hand, you will be reading the equivalent of around 80 pages from some other magazine. We are trying not to bury you under an avalanche of ads. In return, we ask that you at least read what our sponsors have to say. If you're like me, you're to the point that you automatically skip every other page while reading magazines, because odds are, that page was an ad. Not so with Manci Games. Odds are, that page has content on it. So, give our sponsors a chance when one shows up.

Okay, that's enough of the jabber here. Get to reading! I sincerely hope you enjoy Issue #1. Don't forget to drop us a line at: feedback@mancigames.com to let us know what you loved, what you liked, what you disliked, what you hated, and...what we need to add!

As Joe Santulli of Digital Press is fond of saying...Game ON!

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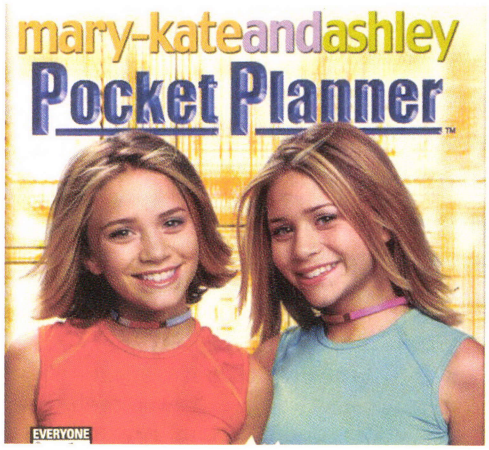

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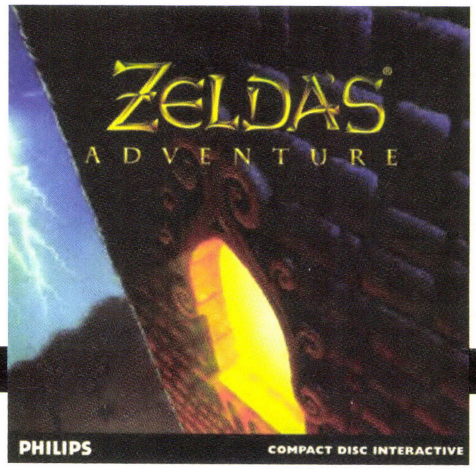


Page 29: The Zelda you never knew!

The Nintendo... Workboy!

by Leonard Herman, "The Game Scholar"

Nintendo is a game company and nothing else. There is no DVD-playback on the Gamecube. Nor does the Gameboy Advance double as a cell phone or organizer. However, since the original Gameboy's introduction in 1989 there have been a number of non-gaming applications made available by third-party vendors.

These devices range the gamut from radios and MP3 players to organizers and travel guides. Note that none of these are designed for the Gameboy Advance. Let's take a look at some of them.

MUSICAL DEVICES:

Tini-Tuner (Interact) - Gameboy Color - 2000

The Tini Tuner is an FM tuner that attaches to the side of the Gameboy Color. It plugs directly into the link port and draws power directly from the Gameboy. One nice feature is that you can play a game while listening to the radio since it does not utilize the cartridge slot. The sound is crisp and won't even disturb anyone around you if you use the included Ear Bud Earphones.

Nanoloop (Oliver Wittchow) - Gameboy Original - 2001

For those who would like to make their own music, The Nanoloop synthesizer/sequencer may fit your needs...or maybe not.

The Nanoloop website defines it as a "step-sequencer," which means that a loop of 16 musical steps continuously repeats. A 4 x 4 grid represents these steps on the Gameboy screen. Each step can be edited individually and up to four "instruments" can play at once during each step.

If any of this makes any sense to you and you feel that you must own a Nanoloop, sorry, you're out of luck. The Nanoloop was only available in limited quantities from a German-based website. If you're still interested in learning more about this program (think of it as a primitive MTV Music Generator), check out:
www.nanoloop.com.

TRAVEL COMPANIONS:

InfoGenuis Frommers Travel Guide (Gametek) - Gameboy Original - 1991

Gametek, the pioneer of PDA/Gameboy functionality, produced a cart that lists travel information such as hotels, restaurants, stores, and sites for ten US cities including New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago as well as several toll-free phone numbers that a traveler might need.

The only problem with using this electronic version of the guide is that the original Gameboy, for which

Tini-Tuner by Interact

this program is intended, is approximately the same size as a print Frommers Guide. So much for portability! Another downside is that while the menus are quite easy to use, finding information is still faster if you just look it up in the printed guide.

Without a doubt, the biggest problem with a cartridge based travel guide is that it simply gets outdated quickly. The InfoGenuis Travel Guide, retailing at $40, would be an expensive proposition if you had to buy a new one every year. Of course, since Gametek never offered a second edition, the problem is moot.

InfoGenuis French and Spanish Language Translators (Gametek) - Gameboy Original - 1991

These language translators suffer from one of the same problems as the InfoGenuis Travel Guide: the

information is easier to retrieve in printed form. However, these programs do have several cool features that you can't find in a book. For example, you can enter English words (using an onscreen keypad and cursor) and it then searches the built-in dictionary for the French or Spanish translation (or vice-versa). The cartridges also offer built-in phrases, such as "transportation" and "shopping," that don't need to be typed in. Just browse through category menus until you reach the word you need.

German, Italian, and Japanese translators were planned but never released.

PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS (PDA):

InfoGenuis Personal Organizer (Gametek) - Gameboy Original - 1991

This is by far the most useful of the Gametek InfoGenuis programs, thanks in large part to the battery back-up. The back-up allows for programs like a working clock and calen-

dar, as well as the ability to save information.

Other menu-driven programs include an appointment book, phone directory, note pad, an "800" directory, and a calculator.

Of course, the InfoGenuis Personal Organizer won't give you the storage capacity of a Palm Pilot, but then again...it was released in 1991!

Shark MX (Interact) - Gameboy Color - 1999

Interact marketed this device as a means to send and receive e-mail through your Gameboy, but the program also included a personal organizer, calendar and calculator.

One interesting thing to note is that in order to use any of the Personal Organizer functions, you must first enter a 4-digit PIN. The only way to get a PIN is by connecting to the service. That will prove pretty difficult since Interact discontinued support of the Shark MX service years ago. One word of advice: Steer clear of these babies, as you won't get much use out of it other than collectibility.

Personal Organizer (Innovation) - Gameboy Advance - 2001

This organizer gets an 'A' for effort, but ultimately misses the mark. The program includes an address book, weekly calendar, daily planner, long-grange scheduler, three different types of clocks, and a list of telephone country codes.

So what's the problem? The cartridge comes with a manual whose quality can only be described as "poor."

Mary-Kate and Ashley Pocket Planner (Akklaim) - Gameboy Color - 2000 and E.T. Digital Companion (New Kid Co) (New Kid Co) - Gameboy Color - 2001

Stifle that chuckle! Under the school-kid trimmings lie what are probably the two best personal organizers ever available for the Gameboy.

Powerhead Games developed both organizers, so they are understandably similar.

Both organizers come complete with useful monthly, weekly, and daily calendars that have most holidays pre-programmed. There's also the ever-present address book, to-do list, and clock. In addition, both include the more unusual stop-watch and phone dialer, as well as an assortment of games. It is here that we find the most differences between the two. While the practical applications are the same for both products, the games are decidedly different.

So, what sets these organizers apart from the others? Well for one, you can send and receive information from a friend's Gameboy via the Gameboy's infrared beam (provided both Gameboys have either Mary-Kate or E.T. inside...well not trapped inside...well you get what I mean). That's a nifty feature, but the most useful feature available is the ability to print information via the Gameboy Printer.

InfoGenuis Spell Checker (Gametek)- Gameboy Original - 1991

Think of the InfoGenuis Spell Checker as a portable word-processor spellchecker. Enter any word and the program then searches its built-in American Heritage dictionary and returns a list of words with similar spellings. Unfortunately, the program tends to return a large number of words if the word you are searching for is a common one.

For some reason, a strange cursor-driven calculator is also included.

MISCELLANEOUS APPLICATIONS:

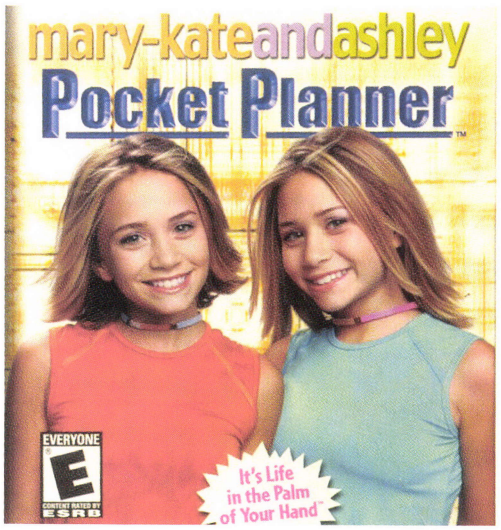
King James Bible (Wisdom Tree) - Gameboy Original - 1994

Do you want to bring Church to a Nightclub? Then snatch up the "King James Bible," from Wisdom Tree. The entire text of the King James Bible is included within this comparatively smaller cart. The program features effortless navigation through all chapters and books of The Bible, as well as an easy to use search feature. In less than a minute I was able to find the five books of the Old Testament where my wife's name, Tamar, could be found.

The King James Bible won't win any awards for graphics. There aren't any--but the presentation is great and even includes two simple games so that you can take a break from all that Bible Study: Biblical versions of Hangman and Concentration.

IZEK (Singer) - Gameboy Color - 2001

Izek has the distinction of being the most costly of all the non-gaming Gameboy applications. That's because the only way you could get it was by purchasing a Singer Izek sewing machine.



I know that sounds a little crazy, but it worked phenomenally well. The sewing machine attaches to the Gameboy with a link cable. Once connected, you choose a stitch pattern from 84 different designs. After that, the Gameboy will guide you through all of its functions to make sewing fun and easy.

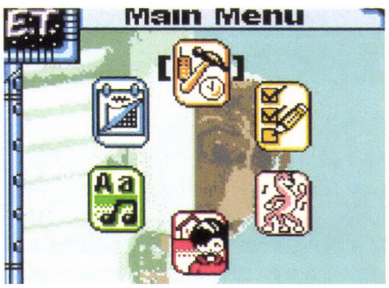
SONGPRO (SONGPRO.com) - Gameboy Color - 2000/2002

The SongPro: A great idea that was ahead of it's time. Introduced at the 2000 E3, the Songpro was supposed to turn the Gameboy into an MP3 player. The unit plugged directly into the Gameboy and MP3 files could be transferred to it directly from a PC through a USB connection. The unit was sold with 32Mb of memory -- enough to store approximately 60 minutes of music.

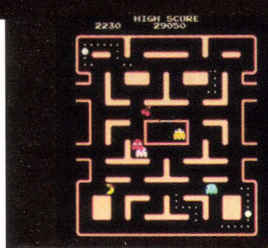
MP3 playback is great, but the Songpro did even more. Using the Gameboy's screen, additional features like viewable song lyrics or album cover visuals were possibilities. The Songboy's built-in microphone even turned the Gameboy into an audio recorder.

Originally, the device was to retail for $79. While this would have been an economical breakthrough in 2000 (when comparable stand-alone MP3 players regularly sold for around $150 or more) the Songpro was not released until 2002. During the time in between, prices on stand-alone players fell, while the price of the Songpro actually increased.

The Gameboy truly was a little workhorse for those who discovered the unique and educational uses for it, but the inevitable march of technology has made full fledged PDAs featuring all of the above mentioned items (and more) affordable to almost anybody. Regardless, there's always something to be said for doing something on a game system that you shouldn't be doing. Just go ask NUON!



Namco Releases Space Invaders / Qix Duo Arcade Machine



You may not have noticed, but Namco is quietly slipping the classics back out into production on your local pizza parlor floor. They recently introduced the Space Invaders / Qix duo arcade cabinet in honor of Space Invader's silver anniversary.

Designed by Taito and released in the U.S. by Midway, Space Invaders was originally released in 1978 and was the first legitimate arcade hit. It was so popular in Japan that there was a shortage of the 100-yen coin that was used to operate it. Its popularity in the U.S. was just as big, even if it didn't spur a shortage of quarters. Space Invaders attacked the home market in 1979, when Atari announced that it had gained exclusive rights to the game for its Atari VCS (Atari 2600) system. It was the first arcade game to be licensed to a home console.

Qix was originally released by Taito in 1981. It's a strange pairing here with Space Invaders, since it didn't gain near the popularity of its cabinet mate. However, it was a modest success with older crowds due to the puzzle game-like gameplay that was very similar to an Etch-a-Sketch game.

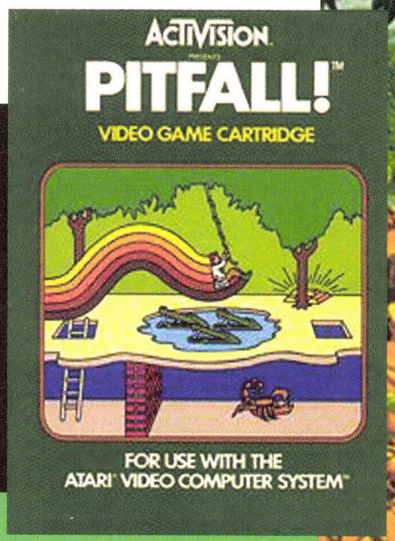
Namco's retro-ride began two years ago when they introduced a Ms. Pac-Man / Galaga (originally released in 1981 and 1982 respectively) duo arcade cabinet after numerous requests from game operators to do so. Turns out that the original cabinets were experiencing things like "burned in monitors, trashed boards, and irreparable boards," according to Namco. One of the coolest things done with this release was the option of purchasing the old "cocktail table" version of the game. Cocktail, indeed...

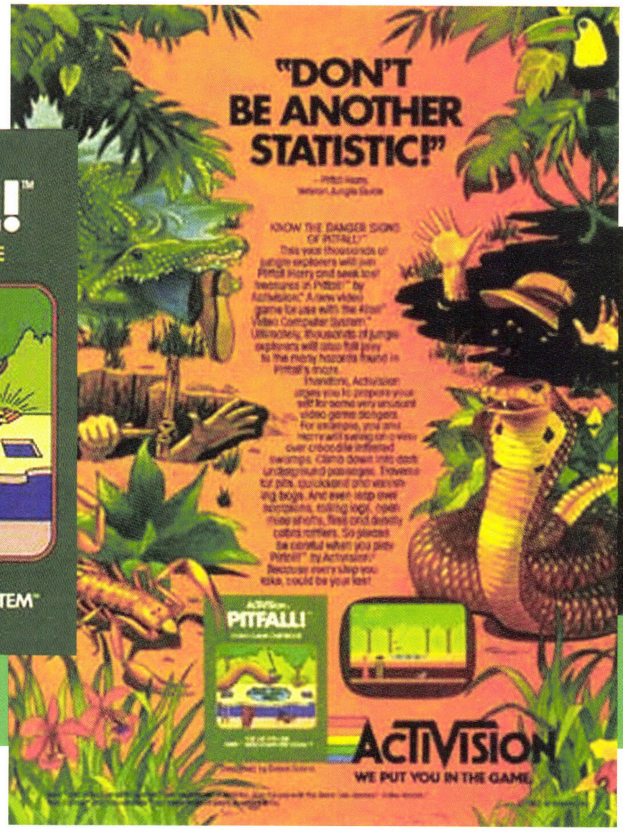
By the way, rumor has it that the original Pac-Man is also included in this cabinet. At the select screen: input up, up, up, down, down, down, left, right, left, right, left, start. Note that this code works ONLY on this new version of these games.

Pitfall!

The Creation of a Legend!

by Jaysen Mercer





In the beginning, there WAS Atari. And there WAS Combat. And there WAS Pong. And all was good. After a period of time, the Atari was able to let us experience even more divine entertainment upon our television. The designers gave us Asteroids. And Space Invaders. And Atari Football. And all was even better. And then one day, everything changed... And all was wonderful.

That change came courtesy of David Crane's Activision game called Pitfall!. Until that point, most games could only display simple things like blocky space ships, square "balls," and tiny tanks. It took one man with a vision and a startling new idea to change all of that forever.

The idea was to present players with a game featuring a "running man." Humans were barely recognizable on the Atari 2600, even when stationary. To have a running human was a semi-insane idea to begin with. Somehow, this idea was made reality.

Now, 21 years after Pitfall's groundbreaking release, David Crane tells us how that running man ran out of his imagination and into the World's heart, creating the "platformer" genre of videogames in the process.

"The running man was its own inspiration," Crane begins. "In the early days of videogaming, the game characters were not typically animated." In an age of balls, paddles, and tanks, Crane felt that with hard work and perseverance, it would be possible to animate a running human on the Atari's rather limited hardware.

If anyone was up to the challenge, it was him.

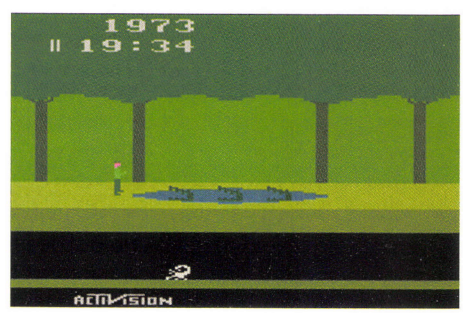
Crane cut his teeth as a game programmer at Atari before helping to form Activision, the first third-party publisher. "In the early days at Atari, the 2600 system architect would occasionally visit the design lab. His typical reaction was to shake his head and say, 'I never imagined the hardware could do that.'"

I wonder what that same system architect would have said had he spotted Crane doing research for the animations needed for Pitfall!. "I spent many hours walking around the Activision design lab...memorizing and sketching my own steps and leg positions." In essence, the man you see running across your screen while playing Pitfall! is none other than David Crane himself.

After perfecting the animations for getting the character from one end of the screen to the other, he began to concentrate on the game world itself. It was decided to set the running-man loose in the jungle. That's when the real challenge began. "Once I settled on the jungle setting, I had to make a playable game. A good game requires many features, including a purpose or goal--as well as threats, challenges, and obstacles to overcome," Crane explains.

It was those obstacles that helped Pitfall become the sensation it was. "In the 2600 days, the threat obstacles relied heavily on what animated objects the machine could display. A great deal of effort went into those objects. You would be amazed at how often an object got into an 8-bit game simply because it looked good on-screen."

Indeed, Pitfall! contained some of the best looking (and most memorable) obstacles seen during the Atari 2600 era. Two of the most famous were the campfire and the "cobra-rattler." Both were the products of fairly simple inspiration. "I used a campfire simply because the flickering flame looked good. And the 'cobra-rattler' exists because the snake only looked good in a coiled-up posi-



tion." Finally, the mystery of the mutant snake is solved!

Of course, the game didn't go through development without a name. Pitfall! was the working name from early on, but there were other potential names being tossed around. "One working title was Jungle Runner, for obvious reasons. We also tried Zulu Gold, but that sounded too much like something Cheech and Chong might enjoy!"

Zulu Gold is actually a pretty interesting title, considering all the gold digging our running man does, but it was another title that finally caught everyone's attention. "I finally suggested Pitfall!, both because it reflected one of the obstacles of the game, and also because I have a fondness for puns." According to Crane, the name stuck, and shortly thereafter nobody could imagine using any other name.

Soon after that, the "running man" also had a name. "Once we settled on Pitfall! for the name of the game, Harry followed soon after. It just sounded right...Pitfall Harry!"

Meanwhile, back in the game design lab, things were coming together quickly. While Crane ultimately was the designer and programmer of Pitfall!, he is quick to credit his colleagues for their part in the process. "The Activision design team worked closely together. We not only programmed games together, we loved to play them as well. We felt strongly that we were part of our own target market, so we played each others' games while under development. It was a good way to know if one of us was going in the right direction." Crane believes that while each designer created a single game's basic concept, sketches, pixel art, sound effects, and gameplay, it was the synergy of the design group that made the early Activision games so good.

He may have had the artistic feedback of the other designers, but when it came down to crunching code, things were pretty much a one-man show. "I estimate that I sat at a computer for 1000 hours programming Pitfall! If you include all of the time spent, from the initial sketches to the final play-tested code, it was about nine months worth of work," Crane remembers. Now that's a lot of TLC for a game that lasts twenty-minutes, max!

Of course, spending that much time programming a single game will result in a unique challenge or two. Crane recalls three such instances as being especially memorable. The first one involves the famous alligator-trio ponds. "If you were really good, you could jump over all three alligators without slowing down. But most people just stood on one head and jumped over one at a time."

If you've played Pitfall!, you know what Mr. Crane is talking about. You'd jump and land on one head. Then carefully balance on his noggin while his mouth opened. Finally, you would press the red button and slam the joystick sideways to jump to the next head when the jaws snapped shut. It felt perfect and worked right every time (well, almost every time). This feeling of perfection did not happen by chance.

"When I first wrote the joystick controls for Pitfall!, I followed real world physics." What this means is that you could jump straight up, or move. But to do both at the same time required a precision combination of pressing the red button at the exact same time as slamming that joystick to the side. For any normal human, this would prove nearly impossible.

"A major code tweak in Pitfall! allowed the player to 'request' a lateral move for 1/20th of a second after jumping," Crane continues. "As a player you will never notice that 20th of a second, but without it you would never be able to make the standing jump to the next alligator."

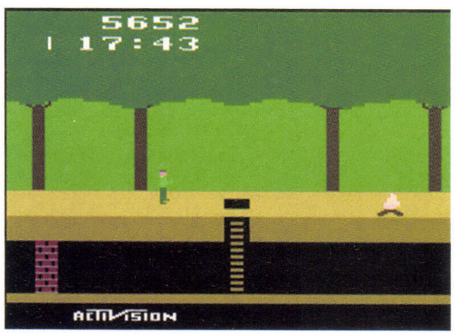
This should be an enlightening thought to all you players out there. You've probably heard people talk about how a game's controls needed "tweaked." Now you know exactly what that means.

"A great game is tuned so finely that while you will never notice specific instances, you can tell that the programmer put in the extra effort to get the feel just right." Many people would argue that this tweaking is part of what separates

Q&A With Crane

"Rank the following universes from your most liked to least liked: The Lord of the Rings, The Matrix, Star Trek, Star Wars, The Terminator."

"Can't be done. They are all different categories. For example, Lord of the Rings would be the best Middle Earth fantasy universe, the Matrix the best simulated world, etc. A more fun exercise might be to rank all the sequels as to how well they remained true to the original concept and promise of the universe. For that ranking I will just say that I have to put the Matrix sequels at the bottom of the list."



a good game from an exceptional game. Pitfall! nailed this, thanks to David Crane's programming.

The second challenge is one that Crane is still proud of even 21 years later. "I used a very fancy programming technique to handle the screen layout in Pitfall!"

The game consists of 254 unique static screens that when traversed make up the game's jungle world. They can be explored by moving either to the right or to the left through the jungle. "Using any normal screen definition table, I would have used up more than half of the available 4096 bytes (4096 bytes! -ed.) available on an Atari 2600 ROM on the screen layout alone. This was not an option," Crane says.

So, he devised a solution to this dilemma that enabled him to define the entire world in just one encrypted byte! This solution was accomplished through the use of a "reversible polynomial counter" (RPS). Basically, Crane was able to assign each obstacle (alligators, lakes, pits, etc.) to one bit of the 8-bit value available from the randomly generated polynomial. So each time the RPS spits out a specific value on the integer line, we see the same screen. To top it all off, the polynomial counter even worked in reverse, enabling Pitfall Harry to run right, or (as most prefer), to run left.

This was much simpler than designing and storing every obstacle in every screen in a particular order. Crane ponders this and says, "I know of no other use of this technique in any other piece of commercial software of any kind. I think it's pretty cool."

The final challenge resulted in a resolution he was never completely satisfied with. "I was never quite happy with the musical stinger that played when Harry swung on a vine. In fact, I never heard from anyone that could tell what it was supposed to be," Crane laments. The "musical stinger" he refers to is Johnny Weissmuller's original Tarzan yell. "The 2600 had such a limited musical palette that I would probably be unable to improve on it to this day."

Once these issues were worked through and a playable prototype was made available to the folks at Activision, Crane began to receive feedback. People were not only impressed, they were amazed. "It was pretty clear that Pitfall! was going to be something special. Even before completing it, I imagined a hundred different games I could do just with Pitfall Harry." It turns out that one-hundred was a low estimate.

Have you ever heard of Super Mario Brothers? How about Tomb Raider? Sonic the Hedgehog? Crash Bandicoot? Any of the hundreds of other "mascot" games that have come our way over the last 20 years? Those games are what the industry refers to as a "platformer" game. Can you guess what the first ever platformer game was?

"Well, we called it the 'Run, Jump, and Climb' genre," Crane says with a smile. Whatever they called it, it doesn't negate the fact that Pitfall! was a true breakthrough. Never before had we guided a human (or anything else) through the perils of an Atari 2600 game-world to this extent. Pitfall Harry jumped over obstacles, swung across lakes, climbed up ladders, and traversed screen after screen collecting gold and treasure along the way. Those humble beginnings spawned a revolution in game design. Crane estimates that over 600 platformer games have been developed in the years following Pitfall! "It was this potential that we could see as the game developed," Crane says.

As the expectations within Activision began to rise, so did Crane's stress level. While the internal reception to his game was exciting, "It also complicated my job," he says. "I had to make the first game in the genre good enough that I didn't become 'the guy who almost got it right.'" No worries there, Mr. Crane... No worries there.

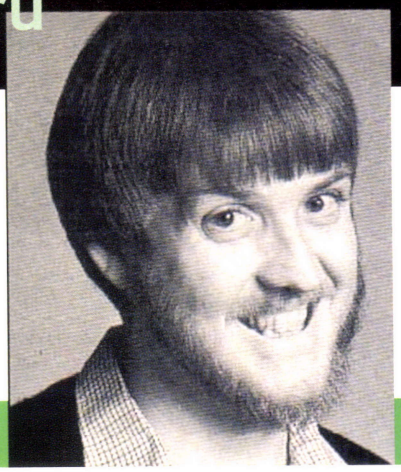
Despite the mounting pressure and expectations, Crane carried on. And he may have carried on, and on, and on, if it weren't for the memory limitations of the 2600 cartridge ROM itself (4096 bytes! -ed.). "On many occasions, people would look at my progress and say, 'There are so many ways to go with this... How are you going to decide how far is far enough?'" The answer, quite simply, was "When I run out of ROM."

Eventually he actually did run out of ROM. After nine months and 1000 hours of programming, the final code was done. The game was released to the public in October of 1982. The effort and attention to detail paid off. "Pitfall! sold many times more copies than the best-selling game before it," Crane recalls. "That kind of success cannot be predicted. We were all surprised at how well it did in the market."

Pitfall went on to hold the number one position on the now defunct Billboard Videogame Sales charts for an unbelievable 64 weeks.

Even now, 21 years later, the game seems to have an almost magical appeal to a wide variety of people. If you mention "Atari" to anyone who played (or still plays), a few games seem to always pop up as representatives for the system: Asteroids, Space Invaders, Pac-Man, and Pitfall! That's quite an honor for the running-man who couldn't get enough of the "Zulu Gold."

David Crane - Then: Console Guru



David Crane was gracious enough to sit down with us and provide some insight into the early days of videogames, as well as what he's up to now. Look below for his thoughts on what it was like "Then." After that, keep reading to discover what he's up to "Now."

DAVID CRANE THEN - CONSOLE GURU:

Manci Games: What was the programming environment like for the Atari 2600?

David Crane: All 2600 games were written in 6502 assembly language. We also had a number of tools and utilities that we developed in-house for debugging, graphic development, and such. Actually, we emphasized the development of our own special tools to make the difficult task of game design as enjoyable as possible.

Why weren't title screens used in those early days?

In those days, memory was sacred. For example, Pitfall! fit into a 4K byte ROM (4096 bytes! - ed.). A title screen would have taken 400-500 bytes away from game play. That's more than the alligators, pits, and swinging vine combined!

Why was a static Activision logo placed onto many of the Activision games?

We were the upstart little company that nobody had ever heard of, so we had to differentiate ourselves in some way.

It's almost impossible to fathom a time when games did not feature some kind of music. However, that was almost always the case on the Atari 2600. Can you expand on that a little bit?

Well, the 2600 could only render about seven true musical notes.

That's a pretty limited palette! Can you recall any games at all that featured music?

Garry Kitchen, my partner at Activision and Skyworks, developed a game called Pressure Cooker for which he really wanted a theme song. He hired Steve Gabori, a New York based jingle composer, to write the song. When he came into the lab he was given those seven notes to use. He thought Garry was joking at first, but eventually he crafted a fine little ditty using the 2600's limited musical notes.

Your Atari 2600 game, Pitfall II: Lost Caverns, actually has a pretty nifty musical element.

I am an electronic engineer by training. I designed a custom chip, for which I was awarded a patent, that went into the Pitfall II cartridge. The chip gave the 2600 additional graphic capabilities, but it also had a small music circuit in it as well. The music circuit allowed a game program to play 4-part music - a melody track, a harmony track, a base track, and percussion. Pitfall II was the first 2600 game to have a fully scored, polyphonic musical track created by a studio composer.

How were you able to squeeze such performance out of the 2600? It looks like a good Nintendo NES game!

Pitfall II is a bit more than a 2600 game - it has a custom hardware chip in the cartridge. By 1984, even though there had been over 600 games created for the 2600, we felt that we were reaching the limit of the technology. And yet the 2600 refused to die! So working with an IC layout subcontractor, I designed the Display Processor Chip (DPC). Many people know that there are sound circuits in the DPC, but more than that, this chip contains special indirect indexing registers that reduced the processing time for a graphic operation by over 40%. This enhancement made possible a new level of graphic richness in 2600 games.

Were there any other games that used the DPC?

Unfortunately, it takes about a year to develop and mass-produce a custom IC. In that time, the 2600 finally began to lose its luster in the marketplace. So, Pitfall II is the only game to have used this advancement in technology. But it allowed me to make a game that was comparable to platform games that came out on other systems in subsequent years.

Did you place any Easter-Eggs into your games?

There are no easter-eggs in any of my 2600 games. I didn't believe in them then, and I'm not sure how I feel about them today. I felt that every byte in the limited ROM space should be dedicated to making the game as full an experience as possible for the guy who paid money for the game.

How involved have you been in the subsequent updates to Pitfall through the years?

I left Activision in 1987, and all the intellectual properties that I creat-

ed remained with the company. I personally wrote Pitfall! for the 2600 and Intellivision, as well as Pitfall II: Lost Caverns for the 2600. I worked next to the programmers who developed the Atari 800 and Commodore 64 versions of the game, helping only when they had problems. I didn't have any involvement with any of the later versions. They were simply different games by different game designers. I didn't relate to those games in any way, positive or negative.

Why didn't the Activision idea of spotlighting the lead designer catch on for good?

Not long after those early 2600 days, game development became much more of a team effort. With a large team it is nearly impossible to credit a single individual. Who is to say who that "lead" person might be? It is probably best that in most cases there is not a single individual called out and specifically credited. The public is better served when it is made clear that the game is the result of a team effort.

Have you still "only worn a suit exactly 3 times in your adult life?"

Hardly. You are quoting from an interview that I gave in my late 20s. That was more than 20 years ago. My life has changed a great deal since then. But I will admit to a fondness for casual clothes, and not too many programmers wear a suit to the office.

Is Tennis still a big part of your life?

Tennis remains an important part of my life. I still play in tennis tournaments. I play at the 5.0 level where 1.0 is a beginner, and 7.0 is a touring professional.

Are there any professional regrets in your life?

There are always little things that one would do differently, particularly in hindsight. But I have always tried to make the most of the opportunities that present themselves, and I honestly have no professional regrets.

Do you still have any ties to Activision?

I still interact with some people at Activision professionally, and Skyworks occasionally works with them. But generally we have gone in different directions.

What was your favorite console to program for?

The 2600 remains my favorite game console ever. It was the hardest, most technically challenging system to program. The designers of the 2600 made it cartridge programmable so that it could play both TANK and PONG. They intended, of course, that as programmers spent time with the hardware we would find new ways to make new games, but it went beyond their wildest imaginations.

It sounds like you really enjoyed the 2600.

If you can imagine a situation where you are innovating every day at work, solving complex technical puzzles, and creating products that millions of people enjoyed, you can get an idea of the fun we had with the 2600.

David Crane - Now: Skyworks

Manci Games: Your current endeavor, Skyworks, specializes in "Advergaming." Can you explain what that means?

David Crane: Advergaming is a business concept. It means to get an advertiser to pay for the development of a game so that the end user can play it for free. This sounds simple, but when we started doing it in 1995 it was a new concept to video games.

In 1995 there was no easy way for someone browsing the internet to pay for gaming. Most internet content was free anyway, so nobody would have paid for games even if there was an easy way to do so - people still thought that if they paid for a game they would get a CD in a box to put on the shelf. Paying for downloaded software is more accepted now, but this was a long time ago.

A unique dilema. Is there anything comparable?

In the early days of television there was a similar evolution. The first television shows were created by sponsors, such as Geritol, or Colgate / Palmolive. The sponsor paid for the sets, cameras, actors, musicians, etc. and the viewing public watched for free. The sponsor plugged their product in the hopes of increasing brand awareness, and that provided the justification for them to spend the money. Skyworks brought the same concept to internet gaming.

Skyworks remains the leader in this form of entertainment, and through Advergaming the game player can continue to play top quality games at no cost.

How long has Skyworks been around?

Skyworks was founded in 1995 by Garry Kitchen and myself. Soon thereafter we brought in Bill Wentworth, another long-time game guy from the art side of the business. As of this date we have our corporate offices in New Jersey, with presences in Northern California, and Park City, Utah.

Was the intention with Skyworks always to go into Advergaming?

Skyworks was started to make games on the internet. We pioneered Advergaming because there was no other way to pay for the game development. After all, I could make a game and put it on the internet for you to play for free, but without any revenues I would not be able to make another one. Advergaming provides Skyworks with a way to pay for the games we make.

Is there a Skyworks game that continually draws you back to it?

There are three that I come back to and play. The first is Skyworks Lanes, my bowling game (now available for download). This started as a simple, online bowling simulation and grew into one of the more played Skyworks games. We put it on a number of sites, such as Macromedia's Shockwave.com, and it was in the top ten games played for more than a year. In fact, we got so many requests for a bigger, more feature-rich bowling game that we made a version for download. The game is for sale on many download sites (such as Yahoo!) and can be loaded onto your PC and played even when offline.

I have also done a number of Pinball games. My particular favorite was a South Park Pinball game made for Comedy Central. This game featured sound effects from the South Park characters, and was amusing as well as fun to play.

Finally, I often go back to play LifeSavers Billiards on the LifeSavers Candystand (www.candystand.com). I am very happy with the way the physics came out on this game, and the computer opponent was a programming challenge. Also, as the game's designer, the best part of playing it is that when I get beat by the computer I can still enjoy the whipping since it is my baby who outplayed me!

Does part of the appeal in designing these internet based games come from the challenge of programming within such a confining environment?

Absolutely. Game design is fun only when challenging. Besides the obvious character creation, art development, game logic, and level lay-

out, a game designer often has to create an entire world - including physics, object interactions, and collision detection. To be able to do all that on a browser and within a small file size dictated by the player's internet connection really separates the men from the boys. Without the added challenge of those physical constraints, I would probably get bored with game design after almost 30 years.

Working with Alan Miller and Garry Kitchen again has got to bring back memories from the good ole days. Are there any new console games in Skyworks future?

Actually we still develop the occasional console game if it makes sense for us. We have our own proprietary 3-D technology that lends itself to an off-road driving game. Look for Quad Desert Fury on the Game Boy Advance on store shelves today.

What would you like the world to know about Skyworks?

As a game designer I hope that people enjoy our games. We specialize in games that are easy to pick up, and that provide a few minutes of fun in the midst of your otherwise busy day (much like the 2600 days). As a businessman, I am proud of the fact that we came up with a business model for a successful internet business where thousands of other tried and failed.

But to keep it simple, I want the world to know Skyworks for fun and entertaining games for all ages.

What does the future hold for Skyworks?

While Skyworks is known for Advergaming, we are branching out in several ways. Some of our online games can now be purchased on a pay-for-download basis. We have developed a number of custom technologies, including our own 3-D display technology and a server for multi-player gaming.

Any major developments in the works?

We are paying close attention to the development of cell phone gaming. Pretty soon the phone in your pocket will be smart enough to be capable of many new entertaining uses. Skyworks will be there as the new technologies emerge to bring games and other creative applications to the mobile user.

Be sure to check out www.skyworks.com for great games or for more information on how to have Skyworks make a game for your website!

Crane Reveals Secrets of Retro Gaming!

Rating the Classic Systems

"Rank the following consoles: Atari 2600, NES, Genesis, Playstation, Dreamcast."

"Again, this is like trying to compare Babe Ruth to Barry Bonds - all comparisons are meaningless. But kudos must go to the first four consoles on your list for major innovation at the time. After that I find it hard to differentiate much between the later systems. The time for real innovation seems to have passed."

Rating the Classic Games

"Rank the following games: Kaboom!, Fishing Derby, Ghostbusters, Laser Blast, Pitfall!"

"Kaboom has to be the most playable of the lot, followed by Pitfall!, Ghostbusters, Laser Blast, and Fishing Derby."

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Just 4 Qix

By Michael Thomasson

Since I've decided on calling my column 'Just for Qix, I thought I'd share with you the story of how the namesake came to be: The first three simple sentences of the original Qix attract mode boldly state "Your marker controlled with joystick. To draw stix press fast or slow. Claim areas by joining walls with stix." Okay. Simple enough... It continues, "Scores based on area. Fast score 250. Slow score 500." That's ten words on how I am to be rated. Ten words that are already creating a sense of urgency within me. But wait! There's more! "Claim more than 75% of playfield for special bonus." Bonus!? What could it be? I must know. And what's this about becoming a "Kicker" member?

As the attract mode of Qix implies, it is a simple but very challenging strategy game. The player controls a marker that is shaped like a small diamond and moves around the game screen at ninety-degree angles. Using two different speed buttons and a 4-way joystick, the player tries to gain real estate from the unpredictably moving Qix by enclosing parts of the play area a single block at a time. The player is safe from the menacing Qix while not drawing, but is pursued by "Sparks" and "Fuses" that can travel on any player-created line. This dynamic of always being safe and in danger at the same time is a unique element and a big (ahem) DRAW to the game!

It's the fall of 1981 and an eleven-year-old boy's mind stumbles around many intriguing questions... including the obvious: How do I pronounce this crazy game, anyway? It is only three letters long and my fourth grade education is already failing me! The true diction is not "QUICKS" but "KICKS." There are two stories that explain the possible origin of how the game was named.

The first tale goes something like this: Taito debuted the Qix machine at the 1981 AMOA show and made it available for play to attendees and honored guests. Rumor has it that Atari founder Nolan Bushnell took time to sample Taito's then nameless new game and was so frustrated by it that he ended up giving the cabinet a few "kicks." While this event is reported to have actually transpired, it is probably more plausible that...

Co-designer and programmer Randy Pfeiffer (half of the rhyming husband and wife team of Randy and Sandy Pfeiffer) had an automobile sporting a vanity license plate reading "JUS4QIX." The second rumor has it that Randy enjoyed this phonetically sounding variant so much that he named his game after it: Qix!

> "Qix was a breath of fresh air and a shot of originality when it appeared on the scene in 1981."

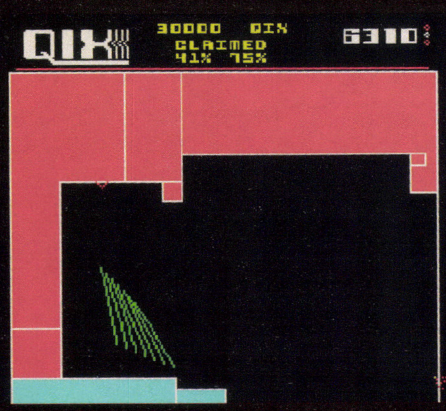
Qix was a breath of fresh air and a shot of originality when it appeared on the scene in 1981. It was decidedly different. A "drawing game" in an era of maze games and intergalactic shooters. It was very much ahead of its time.

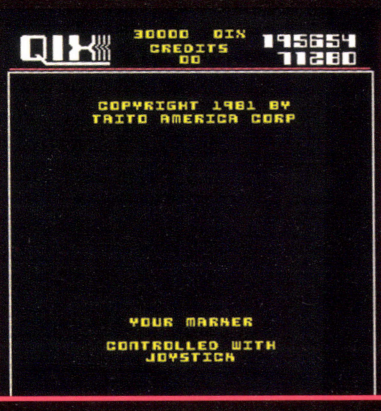
The game was an immediate hit upon its release, especially in more logic-minded locations such as college campuses. It was also profitable among bar crowds, where inebriated clientele fumbled their pocket change into this quarter-eating machine at an amazingly fast rate. This, despite the fact that the machine was deemed "simply unbeatable" by pros due to the dreaded Qix's random and unpredictable movements.

Qix vanished from the arcades rather quickly after a short but modest success. Most machines were converted to better earning Taito titles. The arcade machine is a rare find and is becoming more valuable to coin-op collectors and fans alike. Many enthusiasts have been forced to pursue the Japanese counterpart of the game, known as "Volfied."

After offering Qix II Tournament, an enhanced variant that offered a different color-scheme, Taito placed the franchise in a state of dormancy until 1987, when Super Qix was released to little fanfare. Taito also licensed Qix for release on the Nintendo Entertainment System and Game Boy. Unfortunately, these reissues of the title did quite poorly. Taito next chose to revive the series as Twin Qix in 1995 after the rise of strategy and puzzle games. However, they were too late. A slew of other manufacturers had already overcrowded the market with competing games of Tetris variations such as Bust-A-Move, Columns, and Klax.

Qix is currently enjoying a loyal cult following thanks to its latest revivals: the Namco Duo arcade machine (with Qix and Space Invaders), as well as a 2004 release for the PSOne entitled, Qix Neo. The PSOne release was unannounced and quietly published in America by Mud Duck. The game has very limited distribution, but should be easy enough to find online if one looks in the right places.





The Manci Games / Digital Press Price Guide

"Monthly Price Guide." The mere name sends chills up and down some collector and retailer spines alike. Others have been waiting for this for a long time. So, whether you are pursuing the guide to scoff and mock each listing, or looking up each listing with anticipation, we hope you at least enjoy the intro page that will precede the guide each month.

What follows is a bunch of words and numbers. How do you make sense of it all? Manci Games is here to help! Every month will feature some kind of analysis of your soon to be favorite guide. We dig a little deeper and have the bean-counters provide you some data.

This month's guide features no less than 20 systems and 1,125 individual game listings. Of those 1,125 games, a whooping 173 of them belong to the "savior of the industry," the original Nintendo Entertainment System (or "Famicom" for you import hounds), while a mere 3 games represent the Nintendo Virtual Boy.

Of course the highest average complete value of all listed systems belongs to the Neo-Geo, whose collectors have got to be the hardest of the hardcore. The average listed value is a stunning $415. The next closest (and more reasonable) system is the Atari 2600, which checks in with a still impressive average complete listed value of $246. The low end is represented by the Sega 32X, with a measly average complete listed value of only $9. Surely, the 32X is the system to collect for if you are a newbie and are trying to complete an entire system's collection right out of the gate!

The Manci Games / Digital Press Price Guide

System	Game	Loose	Complete	New
32X	*Below Threshold Avg.	2	4	6
32X	BlackThorne	6	22	30
32X	Brutal: Above the Claw	6	15	20
32X	Knuckles Chaotix	8	30	40
32X	Spider-Man: Web of Fire	32	80	120
32X	Star Trek: Starfleet Academy	8	18	22
32X	T-Mek	15	25	40
32X	World Series Baseball starring Deion Sanders	8	20	29
32X	WWF Wrestlemania: The Arcade Game	5	12	17
32X	Zaxxon's Motherbase 2000	9	20	25
3DO	*Below Threshold Avg.	2	4	6
3DO	3DO Action Pak	8	20	35
3DO	3DO Maniac Pack	10	25	35
3DO	Captain Quazar	6	15	25
3DO	D	5	12	17
3DO	Demolition Man	5	10	12
3DO	DinoPark Tycoon	35	80	120
3DO	Doom	6	15	18
3DO	Dragon Lore	6	10	25
3DO	Drug Wars	4	9	12
3DO	Gunslinger Collection 3-in-1	5	15	18
3DO	Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller	4	12	15
3DO	Horde, The	4	8	10
3DO	Johnny Bazookatone	4	9	12
3DO	Lemmings	4	10	15
3DO	Lost Eden	10	25	30
3DO	Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes, The	4	10	15
3DO	Lucienne's Quest	18	45	65
3DO	Mind Teazzer	6	15	18
3DO	Need for Speed, Road & Track Presents: The	5	13	20
3DO	Neuro Dancer	15	40	50
3DO	Night Trap	10	35	45
3DO	Olympic Summer Games: Atlanta '96	4	9	12
3DO	Panzer General	5	10	15
3DO	Plumbers Don't Wear Ties	5	12	18
3DO	PO'ed	8	15	25
3DO	Putt-Putt Joins the Parade	4	10	12
3DO	Putt-Putt's Fun Pack	4	12	15
3DO	Quarterback Attack with Mike Ditka	4	9	12
3DO	Return Fire: Maps o' Death	4	8	10
3DO	Sewer Shark	8	15	18
3DO	Snowjob	8	20	29
3DO	Star Control II	10	35	40
3DO	Star Wars: Rebel Assault	8	12	20
3DO	Super Street Fighter II Turbo	8	10	12
3DO	Who Shot Johnny Rock?	6	8	10
3DO	Zhadnost: The People's Party	4	15	18
Atari 2600	*Below Threshold Avg.	9	14	20
Atari 2600	Action Pak	n/a	60	85
Atari 2600	Air Raid	800	>999	>999
Atari 2600	Artillery Duel/Ghost Manor	40	60	80
Atari 2600	Artillery Duel/Spike's Peak	40	60	80
Atari 2600	Assault	75	90	120
Atari 2600	Bachelor Party	40	60	75
Atari 2600	Bachelor Party/Gigolo	40	60	75
Atari 2600	Back to School Pak	n/a	60	85
Atari 2600	Berenstain Bears	75	113	175
Atari 2600	BMX Airmaster	350	525	700
Atari 2600	Boing!	60	100	150
Atari 2600	Bumper Bash	90	135	200
Atari 2600	Cakewalk	150	300	500
Atari 2600	Chase the Chuckwagon	75	113	175
Atari 2600	Chuck Norris Superkicks/Ghost Manor	45	70	95
Atari 2600	Chuck Norris Superkicks/Spike's Peak	40	60	80
Atari 2600	Color Bar Generator	150	225	n/a
Atari 2600	Condor Attack	200	300	435
Atari 2600	Copy Cart	100	150	225
Atari 2600	Crazy Climber	100	150	225
Atari 2600	Cubicolor	600	n/a	n/a
Atari 2600	Custer's Revenge	40	65	90
Atari 2600	Death Trap	65	75	100
Atari 2600	Eli's Ladder	>999	>999	n/a
Atari 2600	Frogger, The Official	40	65	90
Atari 2600	Gas Hog	75	113	175
Atari 2600	Gauntlet	>999	>999	n/a
Atari 2600	Glib	90	135	200
Atari 2600	Great Escape	75	90	120
Atari 2600	Guardian	40	75	95
Atari 2600	Halloween	80	120	175
Atari 2600	Harbor Escape	40	70	85
Atari 2600	Ikari Warriors	300	500	750
Atari 2600	Karate	750	>999	>999
Atari 2600	Lochjaw	250	375	550
Atari 2600	MagiCard	>999	>999	n/a
Atari 2600	Malagai	500	750	>999
Atari 2600	Marauder	40	75	85
Atari 2600	Master Builder	75	113	175
Atari 2600	Miner 2049'er Vol. II	75	113	175
Atari 2600	Mines of Minos	40	80	90
Atari 2600	Motocross Racer/Tomarc the Barbarian	100	150	225
Atari 2600	Motorodeo	450	675	800
Atari 2600	Mr. Do!'s Castle	75	113	175
Atari 2600	Music Machine	200	300	435
Atari 2600	Obelix	65	80	125
Atari 2600	Out of Control	185	278	400
Atari 2600	Pepsi Invaders	500	750	n/a
Atari 2600	Q*Bert's Qubes	150	225	325
Atari 2600	Quadrun	300	450	650
Atari 2600	Rescue Terra I	75	113	175
Atari 2600	River Patrol	350	525	700
Atari 2600	Robin Hood	45	70	85
Atari 2600	Robin Hood/Sir Lancelot	50	75	100
Atari 2600	Rubik's Cube	60	75	100
Atari 2600	Sea Battle	35	45	n/a
Atari 2600	Shuttle Orbiter	50	75	100
Atari 2600	Sir Lancelot	45	70	85
Atari 2600	Smurfs Save the Day, The	45	n/a	n/a
Atari 2600	Space Canyon	40	70	85
Atari 2600	Space Chase (monogrammed)	300	n/a	n/a
Atari 2600	Springer	60	80	120
Atari 2600	Stargunner	45	68	95
Atari 2600	Stronghold	150	300	500
Atari 2600	Stuntman	40	75	85
Atari 2600	Submarine Commander	60	75	100
Atari 2600	Survival Island	75	n/a	n/a
Atari 2600	Sword Fight	35	45	n/a
Atari 2600	Sword of Saros	75	n/a	n/a
Atari 2600	Swordquest: Waterworld	75	113	175
Atari 2600	Tank Brigade	40	70	85
Atari 2600	Texas Chainsaw Massacre	50	75	120
Atari 2600	Tomarc the Barbarian	40	75	90
Atari 2600	Tooth Protectors	125	200	500
Atari 2600	Up 'n Down	75	113	175
Atari 2600	Video Jogger	50	125	200
Atari 2600	Video Life	>999	>999	>999
Atari 2600	Video Reflex	50	125	200
Atari 2600	Wall Defender	75	90	120
Atari 2600	X-Man	400	600	750
Atari 2600	Z-Tack	75	90	120
Atari 5200	*Below Threshold Avg.	6	9	13
Atari 5200	Bounty Bob Strikes Back	250	375	550
Atari 5200	Frogger II: Threeedeep!	15	35	50
Atari 5200	Gremlins	15	30	45
Atari 5200	Gyruss	15	25	35
Atari 5200	H.E.R.O.	15	23	33
Atari 5200	James Bond 007	20	25	35
Atari 5200	K-Razy Shoot-Out	25	40	55
Atari 5200	Meteorites	90	135	200
Atari 5200	Miner 2049'er	15	18	25
Atari 5200	Montezuma's Revenge	25	38	55
Atari 5200	Mr. Do!'s Castle	35	55	75
Atari 5200	Rescue on Fractalus	15	20	25
Atari 5200	Star Wars: Death Star Battle	30	60	80
Atari 5200	Star Wars: The Arcade Game	8	20	30
Atari 5200	Zaxxon	20	45	75
Atari 5200	Zenji	20	30	44
Atari 5200	Zone Ranger	10	30	35
Atari 7800	*Below Threshold Avg.	4	6	9

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Atari 7800	Alien Brigade	20	30	44
Atari 7800	Basketbrawl	15	23	33
Atari 7800	Double Dragon	20	25	35
Atari 7800	F-18 Hornet	10	15	20
Atari 7800	Ikari Warriors	20	35	50
Atari 7800	Kung Fu Master	18	20	25
Atari 7800	Mean 18 Ultimate Golf	30	55	60
Atari 7800	Motorpsycho	15	20	30
Atari 7800	Pete Rose Baseball	18	25	40
Atari 7800	Rampage	18	25	30
Atari 7800	Tank Command	50	70	80
Atari 7800	Tomcat: The F-14 Fighter Simulator	12	15	20
Atari 7800	Water Ski	30	40	60
Atari 7800	Xenophobe	25	38	55
ColecoVision	*Below Threshold Avg.	10	15	22
ColecoVision	Alcazar: The Forgotten Fortress	30	45	45
ColecoVision	Aquattack	45	68	95
ColecoVision	Artillery Duel/Chuck Norris	80	120	250
ColecoVision	Blockade Runner	30	45	45
ColecoVision	Boulder Dash	40	60	60
ColecoVision	Campaign '84	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Fathom	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Flipper Slipper	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Frantic Freddy	25	38	55
ColecoVision	It's Only Rock 'n Roll	35	53	75
ColecoVision	Jukebox	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Jungle Hunt	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Motocross Racer	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Motocross Racer/Tomarc	150	225	300
ColecoVision	Mountain King	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Mr. Do!'s Castle	35	53	75
ColecoVision	Oil's Well	25	38	55
ColecoVision	One-on-One Basketball	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Q*Bert's Qubes	55	105	150
ColecoVision	Robin Hood35	53	75	
ColecoVision	Robin Hood/Sir Lancelot	125	300	500
ColecoVision	Rolloverture	35	53	75
ColecoVision	Sammy Lightfoot	45	68	95
ColecoVision	Sector Alpha	50	75	110
ColecoVision	Sir Lancelot	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Slurpy	55	100	150
ColecoVision	Spectron	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Super Action Soccer	45	68	95
ColecoVision	Super Crossforce	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Super Sketch	125	150	225
ColecoVision	Threshold	30	45	65
ColecoVision	Tomarc the Barbarian	40	60	85
ColecoVision	Tournament Tennis	40	60	60
ColecoVision	Up 'n Down	40	60	85
ColecoVision	Wing War	25	38	55
ColecoVision	Word Feud	40	60	85
Dreamcast	*Below Threshold Avg.	2	4	6
Dreamcast	AeroWings 2: Airstrike	6	12	15
Dreamcast	Bangai-o	9	25	36
Dreamcast	Bomberman Online	5	10	16
Dreamcast	Bust-a-Move 4	4	10	16
Dreamcast	Buzz Lightyear, (Disney/Pixar's)	3	10	12
Dreamcast	Caesar's Palace 2000	5	12	14
Dreamcast	Cannon Spike	8	17	29
Dreamcast	Capcom vs. SNK: Millennium Fight 2000	7	15	22
Dreamcast	Championship Surfer	3	10	15
Dreamcast	Confidential Mission	7	20	25
Dreamcast	Conflict Zone	6	15	20
Dreamcast	Dead or Alive 2	7	15	29
Dreamcast	Ducati World Racing Challenge	6	15	20
Dreamcast	Evil Dead: Hail to the King	6	12	14
Dreamcast	F355 Challenge: Passione Rossa	5	12	14
Dreamcast	Fatal Fury Mark of the Wolves	9	22	34
Dreamcast	Giga Wing 2	9	30	44
Dreamcast	Grandia II	7	15	35
Dreamcast	Gunbird 2	6	12	16
Dreamcast	Gundam: Side Story 0079	8	25	45
Dreamcast	Iron Aces	9	20	26
Dreamcast	Kao The Kangaroo	5	10	18
Dreamcast	King of Fighters Dream Match, The	5	10	15
Dreamcast	Last Blade 2, The: Heart of the Samurai	9	19	34
Dreamcast	Mars Matrix	9	29	42
Dreamcast	Marvel vs. Capcom 2: New Age Of Heroes	9	29	44
Dreamcast	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	5	12	14
Dreamcast	Metropolis Street Racer	3	10	12
Dreamcast	Midway Greatest Arcade Hits Volume 2	7	20	25
Dreamcast	MTV Sports Skateboarding	6	15	20
Dreamcast	Namco Museum	6	15	20
Dreamcast	NCAA College Football 2K2: Rose Bowl	2	10	12
Dreamcast	NHL 2K2	5	10	15
Dreamcast	Power Stone 2	9	25	36
Dreamcast	Project Justice	6	25	39
Dreamcast	Record of Lodoss War	9	19	34
Dreamcast	Resident Evil 2	6	15	22
Dreamcast	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	6	15	22
Dreamcast	Samba de Amigo	5	10	17
Dreamcast	San Francisco Rush 2049	6	12	15
Dreamcast	Sega Bass Fishing 2	6	15	22
Dreamcast	Shenmue Limited Edition	9	15	30
Dreamcast	Skies of Arcadia	8	15	22
Dreamcast	Sno-Cross Championship Racing	7	20	22
Dreamcast	Soldier of Fortune	6	15	20
Dreamcast	Sonic Adventure Limited Edition	25	50	n/a
Dreamcast	Soul Calibur	9	15	29
Dreamcast	Spider-Man	9	25	36
Dreamcast	Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles	9	29	50
Dreamcast	StarLancer	4	10	12
Dreamcast	Street Fighter Alpha 3	7	12	18
Dreamcast	Street Fighter III Double Impact	7	12	17
Dreamcast	Street Fighter III Third Strike	9	29	60
Dreamcast	Striker Pro 2000	9	25	35
Dreamcast	Super Magnetic Neo	5	10	15
Dreamcast	Super Runabout San Francisco Edition	6	20	22
Dreamcast	Surf Rocket Racers	4	10	12
Dreamcast	Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing	6	20	22
Dreamcast	Tech Romancer	6	15	20
Dreamcast	Test Drive V-Rally	6	15	20
Dreamcast	Tokyo Extreme Racer 2	7	20	24
Dreamcast	Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram	8	15	22
Dreamcast	Worms World Party	9	25	35
Genesis	*Below Threshold Avg.	2	4	5
Genesis	3 Ninjas Kick Back	3	10	12
Genesis	Action 52	20	35	45
Genesis	Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle	4	10	12
Genesis	Aero the Acro-Bat 2	12	25	30
Genesis	Aerobiz	15	20	25
Genesis	Aerobiz: Supersonic	15	30	35
Genesis	Air Buster	6	15	18
Genesis	Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle	5	10	12
Genesis	Arcade Classics	4	8	10
Genesis	Arcus Odyssey	6	10	12
Genesis	Art Alive!	3	10	13
Genesis	Awesome Possum	5	12	15
Genesis	Back to the Future Part 3	5	10	12
Genesis	Bass Masters Classic: Pro Edition	8	18	20
Genesis	Batman: Revenge of the Joker	8	20	30
Genesis	Batman: The Video Game	6	12	15
Genesis	Battle Squadron	6	15	20
Genesis	Bible Adventures	10	30	35
Genesis	Bimini Run	5	12	15
Genesis	Blaster Master 2	4	10	13
Genesis	Blockbuster World Video Game Champ. 2	100	n/a	n/a
Genesis	Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday	7	12	14
Genesis	Budokan: The Martial Spirit	5	12	15
Genesis	Caliber .50	7	16	20
Genesis	Captain America and the Avengers	10	18	25
Genesis	Castlevania: Bloodlines	7	10	16
Genesis	Championship Bowling	6	12	15
Genesis	Chase HQ II	5	10	14
Genesis	Contra Hard Corps	7	12	15
Genesis	CrossFire	6	15	25
Genesis	Crusader of Centy	10	35	45
Genesis	Crystal's Pony Tale	4	8	15
Genesis	Death and Return of Superman, The	6	12	15
Genesis	Devilish	6	15	18
Genesis	Dino Land	8	20	23
Genesis	DJ Boy	3	10	12
Genesis	Double Dragon	10	25	30
Genesis	Dune: The Battle for Arrakis	10	20	25
Genesis	D&D: Warriors of the Eternal Sun	8	20	25
Genesis	Dynamite Headdy	5	12	15

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Genesis	Earth Defense	5	15	16
Genesis	Earthworm Jim 2	5	10	12
Genesis	Ecco Jr.	6	10	12
Genesis	Elemental Master	6	15	17
Genesis	Exile	4	12	16
Genesis	Exo Squad	7	15	20
Genesis	Exodus	10	30	35
Genesis	Faery Tale Adventure, The	7	12	15
Genesis	Fighting Masters	4	15	20
Genesis	Fire Shark	5	12	15
Genesis	Flicky	6	16	20
Genesis	Gaiares	9	20	25
Genesis	Galahad, The Legend of	4	8	10
Genesis	Gauntlet IV	4	12	20
Genesis	Genghis Khan 2: Clan of the Gray Wolf	8	25	35
Genesis	Goofy's Hysterical History Tour	6	12	15
Genesis	Granada	4	10	15
Genesis	Growl	6	15	18
Genesis	Gunstar Heroes	10	20	30
Genesis	Haunting starring Polterguy, The	10	15	18
Genesis	Heavy Nova	7	20	22
Genesis	Hellfire	5	12	14
Genesis	Herzog Zwei	9	30	35
Genesis	Hit The Ice	5	12	14
Genesis	Home Alone 2: Lost in New York	3	12	14
Genesis	Ishido: The Way of Stones	5	12	20
Genesis	James Bond 007: The Duel	5	8	12
Genesis	Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Footbrawl	7	15	25
Genesis	John Madden Football '93 Championship Ed.	10	25	30
Genesis	Joshua: The Battle of Jericho	10	30	35
Genesis	Junction	6	15	17
Genesis	Ka-ge-ki: Fists of Steel	5	14	15
Genesis	Kawasaki Superbike Challenge	4	10	12
Genesis	King's Bounty: The Conqueror's Quest	10	20	25
Genesis	Landstalker	7	12	18
Genesis	Lethal Enforcers	8	20	24
Genesis	Liberty or Death	12	30	35
Genesis	M.U.S.H.A.	12	30	55
Genesis	Marvel Land	7	15	19
Genesis	Master of Monsters	15	30	40
Genesis	Math Blaster Episode 1	5	12	15
Genesis	McDonald's Treasure Land Adventure	8	15	19
Genesis	Mega Bomberman	6	15	20
Genesis	Micro Machines	5	12	14
Genesis	Might & Magic: Gates to Another World	6	12	18
Genesis	Minnesota Fats Pool Legend	6	15	18
Genesis	Miracle Piano Teaching System, The	40	75	90
Genesis	Mutant League Football	6	15	20
Genesis	Mutant League Hockey	8	16	22
Genesis	Nobunaga's Ambition	3	12	13
Genesis	Operation Europe: Path to Victory 1939-45	13	15	25
Genesis	Outlander	5	15	17
Genesis	Pac-Attack	7	15	19
Genesis	Pac-Man 2: The New Adventures	4	10	12
Genesis	Pac-Mania	5	12	15
Genesis	Phantasy Star II	10	20	25
Genesis	Phantasy Star III: Generations of Doom	12	25	40
Genesis	Phantasy Star IV: The End of the Millenium	12	25	40
Genesis	Phelios	6	15	18
Genesis	Pinocchio	5	14	15
Genesis	Pirates! Gold	18	40	55
Genesis	Pocahontas	6	15	18
Genesis	PTO: Pacific Theater of Operations	10	20	30
Genesis	Puggsy	6	10	18
Genesis	QuackShot starring Donald Duck	5	10	13
Genesis	Raiden Trad	6	10	16
Genesis	Rastan Saga II	7	20	22
Genesis	Richard Scarry's Busy Town	5	10	14
Genesis	Rings of Power	6	12	15
Genesis	Robocop vs. Terminator	4	8	11
Genesis	Rock 'n Roll Racing	10	15	21
Genesis	Rolo to the Rescue	8	20	22
Genesis	Romance of the Three Kingdoms II5	15	19	
Genesis	Romance of the Three Kingdoms III	6	12	18
Genesis	Saint Sword	7	15	18
Genesis	Saturday Night Slam Masters	5	9	11
Genesis	Scholastic's Magic School Bus: Space Exp.	6	15	20
Genesis	Scooby-Doo Mystery	10	30	35
Genesis	SeaQuest DSV	4	15	19
Genesis	Sesame Street Counting Cafe	4	12	17
Genesis	Shadow Blasters	8	12	15
Genesis	Shadowrun	16	25	30
Genesis	Shining Force	17	40	55
Genesis	Shining Force II	15	35	45
Genesis	Shove It! The Warehouse Game	8	12	15
Genesis	Skeleton Krew	11	20	25
Genesis	Sonic Classics	7	10	13
Genesis	Sorcerer's Kingdom	9	15	20
Genesis	Space Harrier II	6	12	15
Genesis	Space Invaders '91	10	25	30
Genesis	Spiritual Warfare	14	35	42
Genesis	Splatterhouse 2	8	20	24
Genesis	Splatterhouse 3	7	18	22
Genesis	Star Control	8	20	24
Genesis	Starflight	8	20	24
Genesis	Street Smart	5	12	14
Genesis	Streets of Rage 3	7	18	22
Genesis	Strider	6	15	18
Genesis	Sword of Vermilion	8	20	24
Genesis	Syd of Valis	7	18	22
Genesis	Syndicate	4	10	12
Genesis	Tecmo Super Bowl II: Special Edition	8	20	24
Genesis	Tecmo Super Bowl III: Final Edition	4	10	12
Genesis	TMNT: The Hyperstone Heist	10	25	30
Genesis	Theme Park	6	15	18
Genesis	Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends	6	15	18
Genesis	Thunder Force II	4	10	12
Genesis	Thunderfox	4	10	12
Genesis	Time Killers	10	25	30
Genesis	ToeJam & Earl	10	25	30
Genesis	Toki: Going Ape Spit	6	15	18
Genesis	Toxic Crusaders	4	10	12
Genesis	Toys	4	10	12
Genesis	Trampoline Terror	6	15	18
Genesis	Traysia	8	20	24
Genesis	Ultimate Qix	12	30	36
Genesis	Uncharted Waters	6	15	18
Genesis	Uncharted Waters: New Horizons	8	20	24
Genesis	Vapor Trail	8	20	24
Genesis	Wardner	10	25	30
Genesis	Warrior of Rome	6	15	18
Genesis	Warrior of Rome II	14	35	42
Genesis	WarSong	14	35	42
Genesis	Whac-a-Critter	6	15	18
Genesis	Wolfchild	5	12	14
Genesis	Y's III: Wanderers From Y's	8	20	24
Genesis	Zany Golf	6	15	18
Genesis	Zero: The Kamikazee Squirrel	8	20	24
Genesis	Zoom!	6	15	18
Intellivision	*Below Threshold Avg.	4	6	9
Intellivision	Body Slam Super Pro Wrestling	25	38	60
Intellivision	Chess	15	23	30
Intellivision	Chip Shot Super Pro Golf	15	23	35
Intellivision	Commando	15	23	35
Intellivision	Congo Bongo	75	110	160
Intellivision	Conversational French	100	150	250
Intellivision	Defender	17	26	35
Intellivision	Dig Dug	24	36	50
Intellivision	Diner	30	45	65
Intellivision	Fathom	30	45	65
Intellivision	Hover Force	25	38	55
Intellivision	Jetson's Way with Words	22	33	50
Intellivision	Kool-Aid Man	15	23	35
Intellivision	Learning Fun I	25	38	55
Intellivision	Learning Fun II	25	38	55
Intellivision	Melody Blaster	20	30	45
Intellivision	Mind Strike	20	30	45
Intellivision	Mountain Madness Super Pro Ski	18	27	40
Intellivision	Mr. Basic Meets Bits 'n Bytes	20	30	45
Intellivision	Pole Position	25	38	55
Intellivision	Q*Bert	16	24	35
Intellivision	Scooby Doo Maze Chase	25	38	55
Intellivision	Slam Dunk Super Pro Basketball	18	27	40
Intellivision	Slap Shot Super Pro Hockey	18	27	40
Intellivision	Spiker! Super Pro Volleyball	50	75	110
Intellivision	Stadium Mud Buggies	30	45	65

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Intellivision	Super Pro Decathlon	40	60	85
Intellivision	Super Pro Football	15	23	35
Intellivision	Thin Ice	15	23	35
Intellivision	Thunder Castle	17	26	35
Intellivision	Tower of Doom	17	26	35
Intellivision	Triple Challenge	15	23	35
Intellivision	Truckin'	15	23	35
Intellivision	Turbo	35	53	80
Intellivision	USCF Chess	20	30	45
Intellivision	White Water!	15	23	35
Intellivision	World Championship Baseball	15	23	35
Intellivision	World Cup Soccer	15	23	35
Intellivision	World Series Major Lg. Baseball	20	30	45
Jaguar	*Below Threshold Avg.	3	8	12
Jaguar	Air Cars (B&C)	16	40	60
Jaguar	Air Cars (ICD)	32	80	120
Jaguar	Alien vs. Predator	12	30	44
Jaguar	Atari Karts 12	30	44	
Jaguar	Battlesphere	30	75	110
Jaguar	Battlesphere Gold	80	200	290
Jaguar	Breakout 2000	20	50	75
Jaguar	Hyper Force	30	75	110
Jaguar	Iron Soldier II	24	60	85
Jaguar	Iron Soldier II (CD)	14	35	50
Jaguar	Protector	30	75	110
Jaguar	Protector SE	30	75	110
Jaguar	Skyhammer	32	80	120
Jaguar	Soccer Kid	30	75	110
Jaguar	Towers II	24	60	85
Jaguar	World Tour Racing	14	35	50
Jaguar	Worms	28	70	90
Jaguar	Zero 5	24	60	85
Lynx	*Below Threshold Avg.	1	2	3
Lynx	Battlezone 2000	8	20	29
Lynx	Block Out	6	15	22
Lynx	Blue Lightning	6	15	22
Lynx	Checkered Flag	8	20	29
Lynx	Double Dragon	10	25	36
Lynx	Hard Drivin'	6	15	22
Lynx	Joust	10	25	36
Lynx	Ms. Pac-Man	8	20	29
Lynx	Ninja Gaiden	6	15	22
Lynx	Paperboy	6	15	22
Lynx	Rampage	6	15	22
Lynx	RoadBlasters	5	12	17
Lynx	Robotron: 2084	10	25	36
Lynx	Rygar	5	12	17
Lynx	Scrapyard Dog	6	15	22
Lynx	Super Asteroids/Missile Command	8	20	29
Lynx	Super Off-Road	8	20	29
Lynx	Ultimate Chess Challenge, The Fidelity	8	20	29
Lynx	Warbirds	5	12	17
Lynx	Xenophobe	6	15	22
N64	*Below Threshold Avg.	3	8	12
N64	All-Star Tennis '99	5	20	22
N64	Banjo-Tooie	8	20	26
N64	Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker	7	18	23
N64	BattleTanx: Global Assault	6	21	30
N64	Bomberman: The Second Attack	12	30	40
N64	Bust-a-Move 2: Arcade Edition	8	23	27
N64	Bust-a-Move '99	9	25	35
N64	Castlevania: Legacy of Darkness	8	20	30
N64	ClayFighter 63 1/3 Sculptor's Cut	8	19	25
N64	Cruis'n Exotica	6	20	26
N64	Destruction Derby 64	6	20	23
N64	Donald Duck Goin' Quackers (Disney's)	9	25	35
N64	Dr. Mario 64	8	20	25
N64	Duck Dodgers	11	28	41
N64	Earthworm Jim 3D	5	20	24
N64	Elmo's Letter Adventure	5	22	25
N64	Elmo's Number Journey	5	20	22
N64	FIFA '99	5	25	30
N64	FIFA Soccer '98: The Road to the World Cup	4	20	22
N64	Flying Dragon	7	20	24
N64	Gauntlet Legends	7	18	22
N64	Goemon's Great Adventure	8	20	24
N64	Harvest Moon 64	18	45	65
N64	Hydro Thunder	10	25	30
N64	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine	8	20	30
N64	International Superstar Soccer 2000	6	25	28
N64	International Superstar Soccer '98	8	20	25
N64	Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards	10	25	35
N64	Legend of Zelda, The: Majora's Mask	10	25	35
N64	Legend of Zelda, The: Ocarina of Time	9	20	30
N64	Magical Tetris Challenge	6	18	23
N64	Mario Golf	9	20	29
N64	Mario Party	9	20	29
N64	Mario Party 2	9	22	28
N64	Mario Party 3	9	27	37
N64	Mario Tennis 64	9	23	30
N64	Mega Man 64	9	20	29
N64	Monopoly 64	7	20	23
N64	Monster Truck Madness 64	6	20	22
N64	Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	8	20	23
N64	Mystical Ninja starring Goeman	6	18	22
N64	Namco Museum 64	7	20	23
N64	New Tetris	7	22	27
N64	NFL Blitz Special Edition	6	21	30
N64	NHL Blades of Steel 2000	4	20	22
N64	Nuclear Strike 64	8	20	29
N64	Ogre Battle 64: Person of Lordly Caliber	9	22	40
N64	Paper Mario	10	26	35
N64	PGA European Tour	6	19	22
N64	Pokemon Stadium 2	12	30	42
N64	Polaris SnoCross 2001	9	24	28
N64	Rugrats: Scavenger Hunt	5	18	20
N64	Rush 2: Extreme Racing USA	8	20	29
N64	San Francisco Rush 2049	9	24	35
N64	Scooby Doo: Classic Creep Capers	8	27	37
N64	Snowboard Kids	6	19	22
N64	Snowboard Kids 2	9	25	32
N64	Spider-Man	12	30	42
N64	StarCraft 64	16	32	50
N64	Stunt Racer 64	9	22	35
N64	Super Bowling	8	26	30
N64	Super Smash Bros.	9	22	30
N64	Tarzan (Disney's)	7	25	29
N64	Tigger's Honey Hunt	5	18	20
N64	Tom & Jerry: Fists of Furry	7	22	27
N64	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	8	20	28
N64	Top Gear Hyper-Bike	5	18	20
N64	Top Gear Rally 2	6	19	21
N64	Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense	8	20	29
N64	Virtual Pool 64	6	18	20
N64	Wheel of Fortune	7	20	26
N64	World Cup '98	4	23	25
N64	Worms Armageddon	11	28	40
N64	Yoshi's Story	8	18	25
Neo Geo	*Below Threshold Avg.	23	58	85
Neo Geo	Art of Fighting 3: Path of the Warrior	100	250	350
Neo Geo	Double Dragon	200	500	725
Neo Geo	Garou: Mark of the Wolves	200	500	725
Neo Geo	King of Fighters 2000, The	120	300	435
Neo Geo	King of Fighters 2001, The	110	275	400
Neo Geo	King of Fighters 2002, The	100	250	350
Neo Geo	Kizuna Encounter: Super Tag Battle	400	>999	>999
Neo Geo	Last Blade 2, The	100	250	350
Neo Geo	Matrimelee	120	300	435
Neo Geo	Metal Slug	400	>999	>999
Neo Geo	Metal Slug 2	200	500	725
Neo Geo	Metal Slug 4	110	325	400
Neo Geo	Metal Slug X	160	400	580
Neo Geo	Neo Turf Masters	100	250	350
Neo Geo	Ninja Master's	100	250	350
Neo Geo	Rage of the Dragons	120	275	400
Neo Geo	Real Bout Fatal Fury 2: The Newcomers	140	350	500
Neo Geo	Samurai Shodown IV: Amakusa's Revenge	100	250	350
Neo Geo	Stakes Winner	100	250	350
Neo Geo	Super Sidekicks 4: The Ultimate 11	400	>999	>999
Neo Geo	Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer	140	350	500
Neo Geo	World Heroes Perfect	120	300	435
Nintendo NES	*Below Threshold Avg.	3	6	12
Nintendo NES	6-in-1 (Caltron)	75	150	200
Nintendo NES	6-in-1 (Myriad)	150	250	300
Nintendo NES	Action 52 35	125	200	
Nintendo NES	Addams Family:Pugsley's Scav.	7	11	30

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Nintendo NES	Advanced D&D: Pool of Radiance	8	20	40
Nintendo NES	Adventure Island II	9	15	40
Nintendo NES	Adventure Island III	12	20	50
Nintendo NES	Adventures of Lolo II, The	12	25	50
Nintendo NES	Adventures of Lolo III, The	20	40	80
Nintendo NES	Adventures of Lolo, The	8	15	35
Nintendo NES	Alfred Chicken	5	15	35
Nintendo NES	Arkanoid W/ Controller	20	40	80
Nintendo NES	Bandit Kings of Ancient China	15	30	80
Nintendo NES	Barbie	8	15	25
Nintendo NES	Bard's Tale, The	10	15	30
Nintendo NES	Baseball Stars	10	20	75
Nintendo NES	Baseball Stars II	18	40	95
Nintendo NES	Battleship	8	10	40
Nintendo NES	Battletoads & Double Dragon	10	25	80
Nintendo NES	Bible Buffet	8	15	22
Nintendo NES	Bignose Freaks Out	15	30	40
Nintendo NES	Bignose Freaks Out (Aladdin)	10	20	20
Nintendo NES	Blackjack	13	30	50
Nintendo NES	Bomberman II	25	55	90
Nintendo NES	Bonk's Adventure	10	60	150
Nintendo NES	Break Time: National Pool Tour	10	15	25
Nintendo NES	Bubble Bath Babes	175	325	750
Nintendo NES	Bubble Bobble	10	32	105
Nintendo NES	Bubble Bobble Part 2	55	100	225
Nintendo NES	Bugs Bunny Birthday Blowout	6	15	25
Nintendo NES	Caesar's Palace	10	20	32
Nintendo NES	Casino Kid 2	10	20	30
Nintendo NES	Castle of Deceit	10	25	45
Nintendo NES	Cheetahmen II	70	125	200
Nintendo NES	Chiller	6	10	20
Nintendo NES	Chip & Dale Rescue Rangers 2	15	35	65
Nintendo NES	Classic Concentration	6	15	60
Nintendo NES	Clu Clu Land	4	30	120
Nintendo NES	Color A Dinosaur	12	25	80
Nintendo NES	Conan: Mysteries of Time	7	15	25
Nintendo NES	Contra	10	25	65
Nintendo NES	Contra Force	12	40	80
Nintendo NES	Darkwing Duck	4	15	35
Nintendo NES	Death Race	5	10	40
Nintendo NES	Destiny of an Emperor	9	20	60
Nintendo NES	Dizzy the Adventurer (Aladdin)	10	20	20
Nintendo NES	Donkey Kong	4	20	70
Nintendo NES	Donkey Kong Classics	10	25	65
Nintendo NES	Donkey Kong Jr.	5	20	60
Nintendo NES	Donkey Kong Jr. Math	10	70	160
Nintendo NES	Dragon Warrior II	20	30	150
Nintendo NES	Dragon Warrior III	30	50	180
Nintendo NES	Dragon Warrior IV	40	90	200
Nintendo NES	Duck Tales 2	10	25	50
Nintendo NES	Dusty Diamond Allstar Baseball	12	26	50
Nintendo NES	Exodus: Journey .. Promised Land	5	10	25
Nintendo NES	Family Feud	10	15	30
Nintendo NES	Fantastic Adventures of Dizzy (Al)	10	20	20
Nintendo NES	Faria	7	20	50
Nintendo NES	Felix the Cat	8	25	35
Nintendo NES	Final Fantasy	7	23	55
Nintendo NES	Fire 'N Ice	25	45	90
Nintendo NES	Flight of the Intruder	5	12	20
Nintendo NES	Flintstones: Surprise at Dino Peak	60	150	500
Nintendo NES	G.I. Joe /Atlantis Factor	10	15	35
Nintendo NES	Galactic Crusader	10	15	22
Nintendo NES	Game Action Replay	40	100	200
Nintendo NES	Gemfire	15	25	60
Nintendo NES	Genghis Khan	10	22	45
Nintendo NES	Godzilla 2: War of the Monsters	15	25	50
Nintendo NES	Golf Grand Slam	8	20	30
Nintendo NES	Gun-Nac	5	15	25
Nintendo NES	Gyromite (Large Box Only)	3	60	120
Nintendo NES	Hatris	8	15	50
Nintendo NES	Hot Slots	175	325	750
Nintendo NES	Jetsons	8	18	40
Nintendo NES	Joshua: The Battle of Jericho	7	14	30
Nintendo NES	Jungle Book, The (Disney's)	12	25	55
Nintendo NES	King Neptune's Adventure	10	30	40
Nintendo NES	King of Kings: The Early Years	7	14	30
Nintendo NES	Kings Quest V	7	18	35
Nintendo NES	Lemmings	10	20	35
Nintendo NES	L'Empereur	14	28	60
Nintendo NES	Linus Spacehead's Crus. (Aladdin)	10	20	20
Nintendo NES	Little Samson	30	50	90
Nintendo NES	Magician	8	20	30
Nintendo NES	Maniac Mansion	11	26	55
Nintendo NES	Mario's Time Machine	8	20	40
Nintendo NES	Maxi-15	15	40	60
Nintendo NES	Mega Man	15	30	100
Nintendo NES	Mega Man 2	10	25	80
Nintendo NES	Mega Man 3	10	25	80
Nintendo NES	Mega Man 4	10	30	100
Nintendo NES	Mega Man 5	25	40	100
Nintendo NES	Mega Man 6	20	45	100
Nintendo NES	Menace Beach	35	75	125
Nintendo NES	Mermaids of Atlantis	10	25	50
Nintendo NES	Mickey Adventures in Numberland	7	15	30
Nintendo NES	Mickey's Safari in Letterland	7	15	30
Nintendo NES	Micro Machines	10	15	25
Nintendo NES	Micro Machines (Aladdin Version)	10	20	20
Nintendo NES	Might & Magic: Inner Sanctum	11	20	50
Nintendo NES	Mighty Final Fight	12	25	45
Nintendo NES	Miracle Piano Teaching System	10	80	n/a
Nintendo NES	Mission Cobra	8	20	30
Nintendo NES	Monopoly	5	12	20
Nintendo NES	Monster Truck Rally	7	11	15
Nintendo NES	Moon Ranger	7	15	30
Nintendo NES	Motor City Patrol	7	15	25
Nintendo NES	Ms. Pac-Man (Namco)	14	25	45
Nintendo NES	Ms. Pac-Man (Tengen)	12	18	35
Nintendo NES	Nin. World Champ '90 (gray/gold)	>999	n/a	n/a
Nintendo NES	Nobunaga's Ambition	5	15	30
Nintendo NES	Nobunaga's Ambition II	12	28	50
Nintendo NES	Operation Secret Storm	14	30	60
Nintendo NES	Pac-Man (Namco)	14	25	30
Nintendo NES	Pac-Man (Tengen)	10	17	25
Nintendo NES	Pac-Mania	10	16	40
Nintendo NES	Palamedes	5	12	30
Nintendo NES	Panic Restaurant	15	45	75
Nintendo NES	Paperboy 2	10	16	35
Nintendo NES	Peek-a-Boo Poker	175	325	750
Nintendo NES	Pirates!	13	24	45
Nintendo NES	Pro Sport Hockey	5	20	50
Nintendo NES	Pyramid	8	16	28
Nintendo NES	Qix	10	18	45
Nintendo NES	Quattro Adventure (Aladdin)	10	20	20
Nintendo NES	Quattro Arcade	7	12	25
Nintendo NES	Quattro Sports (Aladdin Version)	10	20	20
Nintendo NES	R.C. Pro-Am II	15	24	55
Nintendo NES	Race America	5	10	20
Nintendo NES	Rainbow Islands	12	25	75
Nintendo NES	Road Runner	5	11	22
Nintendo NES	Romance of the Three Kingdoms	6	15	32
Nintendo NES	Romance of the Three Kingdoms II	10	25	45
Nintendo NES	Secret Scout	30	65	100
Nintendo NES	Sesame Street ABC/123	4	10	15
Nintendo NES	Sesame Street: Countdown	7	11	20
Nintendo NES	Shingen the Ruler	4	10	20
Nintendo NES	Snow Brothers	20	40	80
Nintendo NES	Solitaire	15	25	35
Nintendo NES	Space Shuttle Project	7	11	18
Nintendo NES	Sqoon	6	25	70
Nintendo NES	Stack-Up	8	150	200
Nintendo NES	Stadium Events	275	900	>999
Nintendo NES	Star Trek: 25th Anniversary	6	15	22
Nintendo NES	Star Trek: The Next Generation	10	23	33
Nintendo NES	Star Wars	8	15	30
Nintendo NES	Star Wars: ESB	8	15	30
Nintendo NES	Stunt Kids	8	16	25
Nintendo NES	Sunday Funday	7	14	30
Nintendo NES	Super Cars	6	15	25
Nintendo NES	Super Dodge Ball	16	30	50
Nintendo NES	Sword Master	7	11	18
Nintendo NES	Tagin' Dragon	8	25	45
Nintendo NES	TMNT: Tournament Fighters	14	30	60
Nintendo NES	Tetris (Tengen)	25	40	100
Nintendo NES	Thunder & Lightning	6	17	25
Nintendo NES	Times of Lore	10	15	25
Nintendo NES	Tiny Toon Adv. 2: Wackyland	10	18	30

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Nintendo NES	Tiny Toon Adv. Cartoon Workshop	10	15	20
Nintendo NES	Toobin'	10	18	30
Nintendo NES	Trolls on Treasure Island(w/troll)	6	20	200
Nintendo NES	Ultima: Quest of the Avatar	10	15	40
Nintendo NES	Ultima: Warriors of Destiny	15	23	60
Nintendo NES	Uncharted Waters	10	25	35
Nintendo NES	Wacky Races	9	18	40
Nintendo NES	Wally Bear and the NO! Gang	6	15	30
Nintendo NES	Wario's Woods	7	16	32
Nintendo NES	Wheel of Fortune: Vanna White	4	8	20
Nintendo NES	Wizardry II: Knight of Diamonds	8	15	25
Nintendo NES	Wrecking Crew	5	30	100
Nintendo NES	Zombie Nation	10	18	35
Saturn	*Below Threshold Avg.	2	4	6
Saturn	3D Baseball	5	12	17
Saturn	Albert Odyssey: Legend of Eldean	15	25	30
Saturn	BattleSport	6	15	22
Saturn	Blazing Heroes	7	16	22
Saturn	Bug Too!	6	15	20
Saturn	Burning Rangers	15	45	65
Saturn	Center Ring Boxing	6	15	22
Saturn	Contra: Legacy of War	6	17	25
Saturn	Crypt Killer	5	12	17
Saturn	Darklight Conflict	6	12	20
Saturn	Daytona USA: Championship Cir. Ed. Netlink	8	20	29
Saturn	Dragon Force	15	50	65
Saturn	Guardian Heroes	15	55	75
Saturn	Herc's Adventures	6	15	25
Saturn	Highway 2000	5	12	17
Saturn	House of the Dead, The	15	45	60
Saturn	Iron Storm	8	25	30
Saturn	Lunacy	8	25	35
Saturn	Magic Carpet	5	12	16
Saturn	Magic Knight Rayearth	12	30	45
Saturn	Manx TT Super Bike	6	12	16
Saturn	Marvel Super Heroes	10	15	20
Saturn	Maximum Force	5	9	10
Saturn	Mega Man 8: Anniversary Collector's Edition	10	25	40
Saturn	Mega Man X4	10	20	36
Saturn	Minnesota Fats Pool Legend	5	12	15
Saturn	Mystaria	7	20	25
Saturn	Norse by Norsewest: The Lost Vikings 2	5	15	22
Saturn	Olympic Soccer	5	10	12
Saturn	Pandemonium!	6	10	15
Saturn	Panzer Dragoon	8	12	20
Saturn	Panzer Dragoon Saga	50	125	150
Saturn	Panzer Dragoon Zwei	10	20	25
Saturn	PTO 2: Pacific Theater of Operations	5	12	15
Saturn	Rampage World Tour	6	15	22
Saturn	Rayman	6	12	20
Saturn	Resident Evil	8	16	20
Saturn	Saturn Bomberman	15	40	60
Saturn	Sega Ages	10	25	30
Saturn	Shining Force III	35	50	75
Saturn	Shining the Holy Ark	15	25	30
Saturn	Shining Wisdom	12	25	30
Saturn	Shinobi Legions	6	12	18
Saturn	Sky Target	6	8	20
Saturn	Sonic Jam	10	30	40
Saturn	Spot Goes to Hollywood	6	10	14
Saturn	Steep Slope Sliders	8	15	25
Saturn	Street Fighter Collection	25	40	50
Saturn	Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	15	20	25
Saturn	Theme Park	7	15	19
Saturn	Valora Valley Golf	5	15	20
Saturn	Virtua Cop 2 [w/gun]	15	35	40
Saturn	Virtual Casino	4	8	10
Saturn	Virtual On: Cyber Troopers Netlink Edition	6	10	15
Saturn	Winning Post	14	30	40
Saturn	Winter Heat '98	7	15	20
Saturn	WWF Wrestlemania: The Arcade Game	6	10	15
Saturn	X-Men: Children of the Atom	7	10	16
Sega CD	*Below Threshold Avg.	2	4	6
Sega CD	Bug Blasters: The Exterminators	9	30	44
Sega CD	Citizen X	6	25	30
Sega CD	Crime Patrol	8	20	24
Sega CD	Dark Wizard	9	20	30
Sega CD	Dungeon Explorer	9	15	20
Sega CD	Earthworm Jim Special Edition	8	20	25
Sega CD	ESPN NBA Hang Time '95	4	10	12
Sega CD	Final Fight CD	6	15	20
Sega CD	Flink, The Misadventures of	5	10	12
Sega CD	Heart of the Alien	15	25	30
Sega CD	Jaguar XJ220	8	25	28
Sega CD	Keio Flying Squadron	20	60	70
Sega CD	Lawnmower Man, The	9	20	25
Sega CD	Lords of Thunder	9	25	35
Sega CD	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue	20	70	100
Sega CD	Lunar: The Silver Star	15	40	55
Sega CD	Mad Dog II: The Lost Gold	7	15	20
Sega CD	My Paint: The Animated Paint Program	5	6	8
Sega CD	Night Trap (original)	10	30	50
Sega CD	Night Trap (re-release)	8	20	30
Sega CD	Panic!	6	10	15
Sega CD	Popful Mail	10	45	55
Sega CD	Radical Rex	6	15	25
Sega CD	Revengers of Vengeance	6	10	15
Sega CD	Road Avenger	6	15	20
Sega CD	Road Rash	6	12	20
Sega CD	Samurai Shodown	9	20	35
Sega CD	Secret of Monkey Island	6	15	18
Sega CD	Shining Force CD	20	40	80
Sega CD	Snatcher	25	80	120
Sega CD	Software Toolworks' Star Wars Chess, The	6	15	18
Sega CD	Space Adventure, The	10	50	75
Sega CD	Star Strike	9	30	36
Sega CD	Third World War	10	25	30
Sega CD	Time Gal	7	25	30
Sega CD	Vay	9	30	45
Sega CD	Wild Woody	5	15	18
Sega Master System	*Below Threshold Avg.	2	5	7
Sega Master System	Alex Kidd in Shinobi World	16	40	60
Sega Master System	Altered Beast	6	16	23
Sega Master System	Castle of Illusion: Mickey Mouse	14	35	50
Sega Master System	Columns	6	15	22
Sega Master System	Cyborg Hunter	7	18	26
Sega Master System	Dick Tracy	8	20	29
Sega Master System	ESWAT: Cyber Police - City Under	6	15	22
Sega Master System	Ghouls 'n Ghosts	6	15	22
Sega Master System	Golden Axe	6	16	23
Sega Master System	Golden Axe Warrior	12	30	44
Sega Master System	Golvellius: Valley of Doom	6	15	22
Sega Master System	J. Buster Douglas KO Boxing	16	45	60
Sega Master System	Joe Montana Football	7	18	26
Sega Master System	King's Quest	7	18	26
Sega Master System	Michael Jackson's Moonwalker	11	28	41
Sega Master System	Montezuma's Revenge	7	18	26
Sega Master System	Parlour Games	6	15	22
Sega Master System	Phantasy Star	14	35	50
Sega Master System	Power Strike	14	35	50
Sega Master System	Psycho Fox	6	16	23
Sega Master System	Slap Shot	10	25	36
Sega Master System	Sonic the Hedgehog	12	30	44
Sega Master System	Spell Caster	6	16	23
Sega Master System	Spider-Man	8	21	30
Sega Master System	Strider	10	25	36
Sega Master System	Super Monaco GP	6	15	22
Sega Master System	Wonder Boy III: Dragon's Trap	9	23	33
Sega Master System	Y's: The Vanished Omens	8	20	29
SNES	*Below Threshold Avg.	4	6	15
SNES	3 Ninjas Kick Back	4	12	17
SNES	7th Saga, The	8	12	20
SNES	Act Raiser	10	15	25
SNES	Act Raiser 2	15	25	35
SNES	Adventures of Kid Kleets	7	12	17
SNES	Aero Fighters	25	50	80
SNES	Aero the Acrobat 2	12	22	27
SNES	Aerobiz	13	20	40
SNES	Aerobiz: Supersonic	18	30	50
SNES	Arcana	9	15	22
SNES	Ardy Lightfoot	9	20	35
SNES	Bass Masters Classic: Pro Edition	5	12	15
SNES	Battletoads & Double Dragon	6	12	15
SNES	Battletoads in Battlemaniacs	6	12	15
SNES	Bazooka Blitzkrieg	7	15	22
SNES	Bebe's Kids	14	25	40
SNES	Brain Lord	6	14	20
SNES	Breath of Fire	16	25	50

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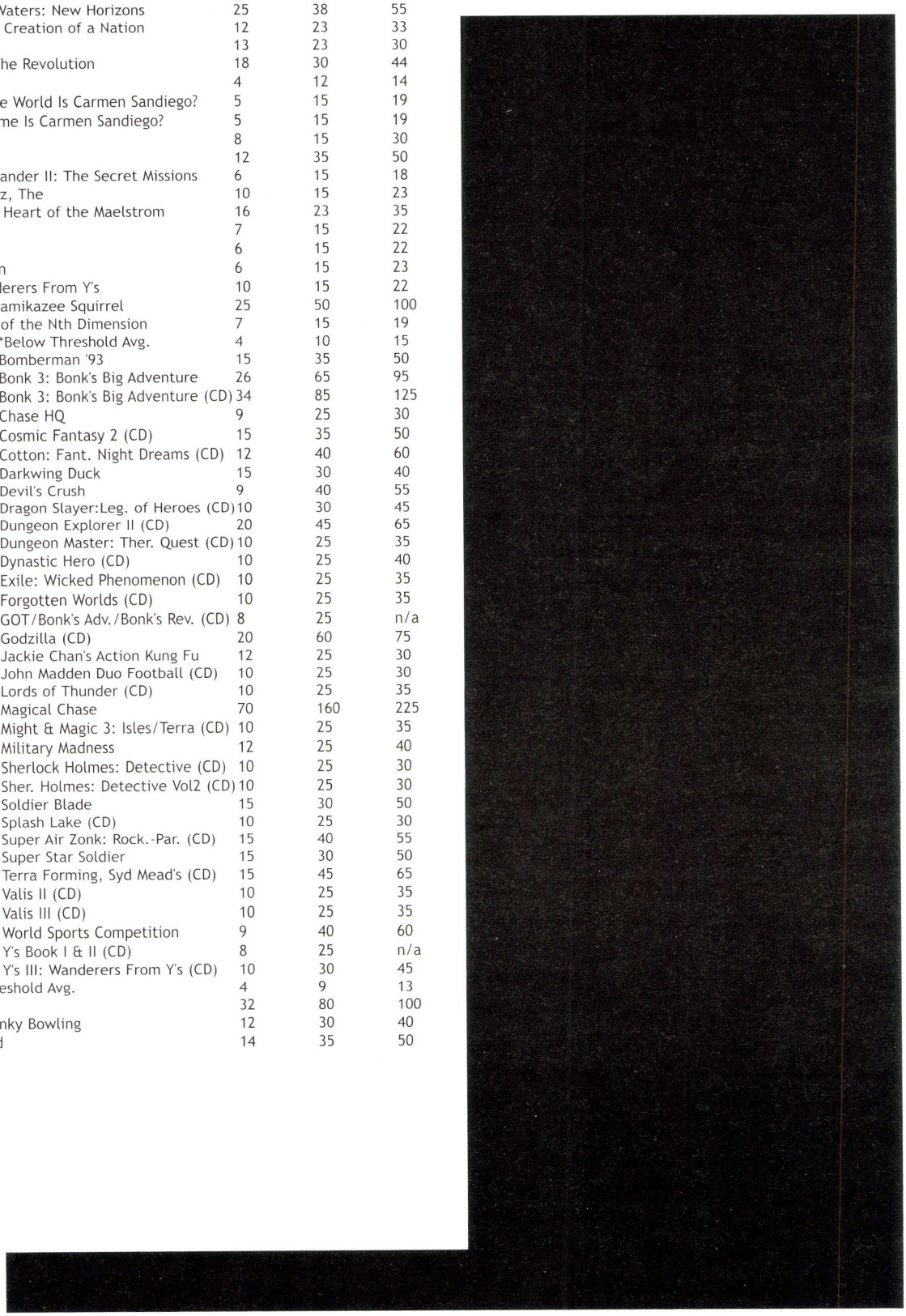
SNES	Breath of Fire II	25	45	75
SNES	Bronkie the Bronchiasaurus	11	20	30
SNES	Bubsy II	4	12	14
SNES	Captain Novolin	11	20	30
SNES	Castlevania: Dracula X	35	70	125
SNES	Chavez	7	15	30
SNES	Chavez II	10	25	50
SNES	Chester Cheetah: Wild Wild Quest	4	12	14
SNES	Choplifter III: Rescue & Survive	5	12	16
SNES	Chrono Trigger	25	45	100
SNES	Civilization, Sid Meier's	12	18	26
SNES	Clay Fighter: Tournament Edition	9	20	35
SNES	Claymates	8	15	30
SNES	Darius Twin	8	12	16
SNES	Donkey Kong Country 3: Dixie Kong's...	10	15	25
SNES	Donkey Kong Country Competition Edition	100	200	n/a
SNES	Double Dragon V: The Shadow Falls	3	14	16
SNES	Dragon View: Drakkhen 2	12	18	26
SNES	Dream T.V.	12	18	26
SNES	E.V.O.: Search for Eden	25	45	80
SNES	EarthBound	30	50	100
SNES	Eek the Cat	10	25	40
SNES	Exertainment Mountain Bike Rally 25	50	75	
SNES	Exertainment Mtn. Bike Rally/Speed Racer	150	225	350
SNES	Family Dog	4	14	16
SNES	Final Fantasy II	22	30	100
SNES	Final Fantasy III	25	40	100
SNES	Final Fantasy: Mystic Quest	17	25	50
SNES	Final Fight 2	10	15	30
SNES	Final Fight 3	14	25	40
SNES	Final Fight Guy	25	50	100
SNES	Full Throttle: All-American Racing 7	14	17	
SNES	Fun 'n Games	20	40	100
SNES	Gemfire	15	25	40
SNES	Genghis Khan 2: Clan of the Gray Wolf	17	30	45
SNES	Hagane: The Final Conflict	7	15	20
SNES	Harvest Moon	35	60	125
SNES	Hurricanes	9	15	24
SNES	Ignition Factor	8	15	20
SNES	Illusion Of Gaia	13	18	30
SNES	Incantation	7	12	15
SNES	Inindo: Way of the Ninja	6	12	15
SNES	Inspector Gadget	9	15	24
SNES	Irem Skins Game, The	6	15	19
SNES	J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings	15	25	40
SNES	Jimmy Connors Pro Tennis Tour	6	15	18
SNES	Joe & Mac 2: Lost in the Tropics	5	12	14
SNES	Kid Klown in Crazy Chase	5	12	15
SNES	King Arthur & the Knights of Justice	10	15	24
SNES	Kirby Super Star: 8 Games in One!	17	30	50
SNES	Kirby's Avalanche	11	15	25
SNES	Kirby's Dream Course	11	15	25
SNES	Kirby's Dream Land 3	16	30	50
SNES	Lagoon	10	15	23
SNES	Liberty or Death	16	25	40
SNES	Lord of Darkness	15	23	35
SNES	Lost Vikings II, The	9	15	22
SNES	Lufia & The Fortress of Doom	18	30	50
SNES	Lufia 2: Rise of the Sinistrals	25	40	60
SNES	Magic Boy	6	12	15
SNES	Mario Paint (w/ mouse) [U]	18	27	39
SNES	Math Blaster Episode 1	14	21	30
SNES	Mega Man 7	35	50	100
SNES	Mega Man X	13	20	40
SNES	Mega Man X2	35	50	100
SNES	Mega Man X3	45	70	125
SNES	Mega Man's Soccer	18	25	40
SNES	Metal Marines	17	30	50
SNES	Metal Warriors	20	40	80
SNES	Midway's Arcade Greatest Hits	10	25	40
SNES	Might & Magic III: Isles of Terra	16	25	40
SNES	Miracle Piano Teaching System (cart only)	24	n/a	n/a
SNES	Mohawk & Headphone Jack	13	18	26
SNES	Mr. Nutz	12	18	23
SNES	Musya: Classic Japanese Tale of Horror	13	18	26
SNES	Nickeldeon 'Guts'	6	12	14
SNES	Ninja Gaiden Trilogy	35	50	80
SNES	Ninja Warriors	9	15	22
SNES	No Escape	10	18	23
SNES	Nobunaga's Ambition	6	15	20
SNES	Nosferatu	7	12	17
SNES	Ogre Battle: March of the Black Queen	20	30	50
SNES	Operation Europe: Path to Victory 1939-45	19	30	50
SNES	Operation Thunderbolt	9	14	20
SNES	Oscar	10	20	35
SNES	Pac-in-Time	8	12	18
SNES	Packy & Marlon	11	20	30
SNES	Pac-Man 2: The New Adventures	8	15	23
SNES	Paladin's Quest	12	18	26
SNES	Pieces	15	25	40
SNES	Pocky and Rocky	12	20	35
SNES	Pocky and Rocky 2	15	25	50
SNES	Power Piggs of the Dark Age	9	14	20
SNES	Power Rangers Zeo: Battle Racers	6	15	22
SNES	Prehistorik Man	10	16	40
SNES	Prince of Persia 2	12	18	26
SNES	Pro Sport Hockey	4	12	14
SNES	PTO 2: Pacific Theater of Operations	25	38	55
SNES	PTO: Pacific Theater of Operations	19	30	44
SNES	Pushover	6	12	15
SNES	Q*Bert 3	12	18	26
SNES	Ranma 1/2: Hard Battle	9	15	21
SNES	Rap Jam Volume 1	6	12	18
SNES	Realm	10	18	26
SNES	Relief Pitcher	7	15	21
SNES	Ren & Stimpy Show, The: Fire Dogs	12	25	50
SNES	Rex Ronan: Experimental Surgeon	11	20	40
SNES	RoboTrek	6	15	22
SNES	Rock 'n Roll Racing	14	25	45
SNES	Romance of the Three Kingdoms II	12	23	30
SNES	Rom. of the 3 Kingdoms III: Dragon/Destiny	16	30	44
SNES	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms IV: Wall of Fire	25	38	55
SNES	R-Type III	16	30	50
SNES	S.O.S. Sink or Swim	7	15	22
SNES	Scooby-Doo Mystery	8	15	20
SNES	Secret of Evermore	15	25	40
SNES	Secret of Mana	30	50	100
SNES	Shadowrun	10	15	25
SNES	SimAnt	10	18	23
SNES	SimCity 2000	9	15	24
SNES	SimEarth: The Living Planet	7	15	20
SNES	Snow White: Happily Ever After	8	15	25
SNES	Soccer Shootout	8	18	23
SNES	Soldiers of Fortune	13	23	33
SNES	Sonic Blast Man 2	15	23	33
SNES	Soul Blazer	15	23	30
SNES	Space Megaforce	11	15	26
SNES	Speed Racer	7	12	17
SNES	Star Trek DS9: Crossroads of Time	9	15	20
SNES	Star Trek: Starfleet Academy	10	23	30
SNES	Star Trek: TNG: Future's Past	9	15	20
SNES	StarFox Super Weekend Cartridge	175	n/a	n/a
SNES	Steel Talons	8	15	19
SNES	Stone Protectors	9	15	19
SNES	Street Fighter Alpha 2	11	15	25
SNES	Super Bomberman 2	13	18	27
SNES	Super Bonk	12	15	27
SNES	Super Buster Brothers	9	15	18
SNES	Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars	20	40	80
SNES	Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island	12	15	25
SNES	Super Ninja Boy	11	18	23
SNES	Super Noah's Ark 3-D	20	30	50
SNES	Super Putty	5	12	16
SNES	Super Solitaire	12	23	33
SNES	Super Troll Islands	9	15	22
SNES	Super Turrican 2	15	23	30
SNES	SWAT Kats: The Radical Squadron	8	15	20
SNES	Tecmo Secret of the Stars	17	30	50
SNES	TMNT: Tournament Fighters	7	15	22
SNES	Test Drive II: The Duel	10	22	30
SNES	Tick, The	6	15	20
SNES	Time Trax	12	18	23
SNES	Troddlers	4	12	15
SNES	Twisted Tales of Spike McFang	15	25	40
SNES	Ultima VI: The False Prophet	11	15	22
SNES	Ultima VII: The Black Gate	20	30	44

SNES	Ultima: Runes of Virtue II	16	23	33
SNES	Ultimate Fighter	6	15	20
SNES	Uncharted Waters	16	23	35
SNES	Uncharted Waters: New Horizons	25	38	55
SNES	Utopia: The Creation of a Nation	12	23	33
SNES	War 2410	13	23	30
SNES	War 3010: The Revolution	18	30	44
SNES	WarpSpeed	4	12	14
SNES	Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?	5	15	19
SNES	Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?	5	15	19
SNES	Whizz	8	15	30
SNES	Wild Guns	12	35	50
SNES	Wing Commander II: The Secret Missions	6	15	18
SNES	Wizard of Oz, The	10	15	23
SNES	Wizardry V: Heart of the Maelstrom	16	23	35
SNES	Wordtris	7	15	22
SNES	Xardion	6	15	22
SNES	Young Merlin	6	15	23
SNES	Y's III: Wanderers From Y's	10	15	22
SNES	Zero: The Kamikazee Squirrel	25	50	100
SNES	Zool: Ninja of the Nth Dimension	7	15	19
Turbografx-16	*Below Threshold Avg.	4	10	15
Turbografx-16	Bomberman '93	15	35	50
Turbografx-16	Bonk 3: Bonk's Big Adventure	26	65	95
Turbografx-16	Bonk 3: Bonk's Big Adventure (CD)	34	85	125
Turbografx-16	Chase HQ	9	25	30
Turbografx-16	Cosmic Fantasy 2 (CD)	15	35	50
Turbografx-16	Cotton: Fant. Night Dreams (CD)	12	40	60
Turbografx-16	Darkwing Duck	15	30	40
Turbografx-16	Devil's Crush	9	40	55
Turbografx-16	Dragon Slayer:Leg. of Heroes (CD)	10	30	45
Turbografx-16	Dungeon Explorer II (CD)	20	45	65
Turbografx-16	Dungeon Master: Ther. Quest (CD)	10	25	35
Turbografx-16	Dynastic Hero (CD)	10	25	40
Turbografx-16	Exile: Wicked Phenomenon (CD)	10	25	35
Turbografx-16	Forgotten Worlds (CD)	10	25	35
Turbografx-16	GOT/Bonk's Adv./Bonk's Rev. (CD)	8	25	n/a
Turbografx-16	Godzilla (CD)	20	60	75
Turbografx-16	Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu	12	25	30
Turbografx-16	John Madden Duo Football (CD)	10	25	30
Turbografx-16	Lords of Thunder (CD)	10	25	35
Turbografx-16	Magical Chase	70	160	225
Turbografx-16	Might & Magic 3: Isles/Terra (CD)	10	25	35
Turbografx-16	Military Madness	12	25	40
Turbografx-16	Sherlock Holmes: Detective (CD)	10	25	30
Turbografx-16	Sher. Holmes: Detective Vol2 (CD)	10	25	30
Turbografx-16	Soldier Blade	15	30	50
Turbografx-16	Splash Lake (CD)	10	25	30
Turbografx-16	Super Air Zonk: Rock.-Par. (CD)	15	40	55
Turbografx-16	Super Star Soldier	15	30	50
Turbografx-16	Terra Forming, Syd Mead's (CD)	15	45	65
Turbografx-16	Valis II (CD)	10	25	35
Turbografx-16	Valis III (CD)	10	25	35
Turbografx-16	World Sports Competition	9	40	60
Turbografx-16	Y's Book I & II (CD)	8	25	n/a
Turbografx-16	Y's III: Wanderers From Y's (CD)	10	30	45
Virtual Boy	*Below Threshold Avg.	4	9	13
Virtual Boy	Jack Bros.	32	80	100
Virtual Boy	Nester's Funky Bowling	12	30	40
Virtual Boy	Waterworld	14	35	50



CyberVirus

system: Atari Lynx
developer: Carl Forhan
retropublisher: Songbird Productions
http://songbird-productions.com
released: 2001

Impressive. Most impressive. That recognizable line is the only way to describe CyberVirus for the Atari Lynx.

CyberVirus throws the player into flat outdoor desert or jungle landscapes and asks them to complete various mission objectives. Most of the objectives are a variation on these three themes: seek and destroy, search and rescue, or retrieval. That could get pretty boring, but Songbird does a great job of varying things up just enough to make each one feel like a completely new experience. For example, one mission finds you retrieving documents hidden in the desert, while another finds you extracting lost scientists. Same objective. Two different ideas.

Another way Songbird adds variety to the missions is by utilizing fantastic level design. Each stage finds the player in a different layout than the last. Many developers have taken the easy way out: Design one stage and just vary your mission objectives for each level. CyberVirus makes you feel like you are truly in a different area for each level. Granted, most of the areas tend to look similar, but you at least feel like you are not in the exact same spot as last time.

It seems like every time I play a Lynx game, half of my mind plays the game, while the other half ponders why the system wasn't able to compete with the Gameboy. While playing CyberVirus, I found that to be a deadly combination.

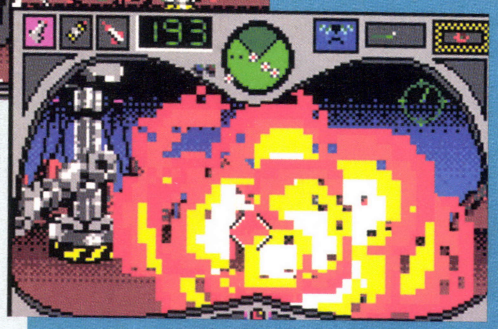
Initially, the game seems like a pretty straightforward First-Person-Shooter (FPS). As the missions progress, you realize those initial impressions were pretty much dead wrong. You need to use your head a lot more often in Cyber Virus than in most other comparable games. That's not apparent during the first few training missions. During these early missions, you've got more than enough ammo and shields to fulfill the objectives that are thrown at you. As a matter of fact, after the first training mission, I found myself wondering if the entire game was 'going to be that easy.' At 16 missions in length, I figured that I'd be done with the game in half-an-hour. Oh, how wrong I was.

Soon, those early missions give way to 'real-world' experiences in which ammo conservation becomes a big part of the game. In addition, some stages challenge you with re-spawning enemies that just keep coming...begging to be filled with laser holes. Do you fulfill their wishes and jam the fire button, or do you zoom around their side, running toward the next objective? It's a tough decision to make correctly the first time (or third time) through most of the stages. Adding to the tension is the fact that there are no continues. Nope, not one. If you die, it's back to the title screen. The only way around sure death is to place yourself into one of the extraction zones before you bite it. You end up having to restart the level, but that's a lot better than having to spend the time to replay all of the past missions.

Interestingly, this simple feature adds yet another level of puzzle-solving to this game. What if you're armor is gone and you've only taken down one of the two radar towers that needs to be destroyed to complete the mission? Do you gamble on being able to take out the second one without dying? Or do you play it safe and call for an extraction? I found myself in this dilemma in multiple instances (usually with the 'gung-ho' instinct winning out...and the obvious conclusion following). It's this simple element that makes starting over feel fair. Ultimately it was your decision to keep going. So, it was also your decision that lead to death.

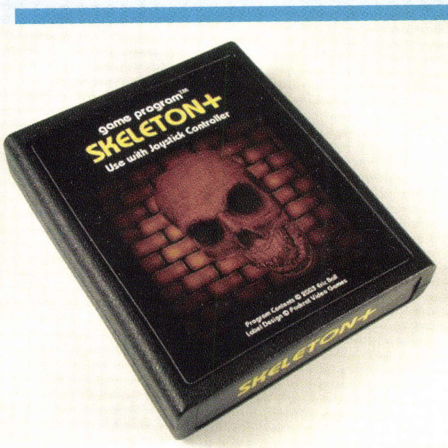
The only thing about this game that doesn't scream 'high production values,' is the manual. In addition to not looking high-end, it also has a glaring omission: the use of the orientation dial on the HUD.

When the only truly below average thing you can say about a game is in regards to the instruction manual, you know you've got a winner...



Skeleton+

system: Atari 2600
developer: Eric Ball
review copy retropublisher: Packrat Video Games*
www.packratvg.com
review copy release: 2003
*Skeleton+ is published by multiple companies. Special thanks to Packrat Video Games for providing this review copy.



Skeleton+'s status is legendary among the homebrew scene. Nobody could imagine a Doom clone being possible on the Atari 2600. Yet, here it is...

I had read and heard a lot about this game during the last couple of years. Most times, it was written off as sort of a programming tech demo. Much focus has been placed on the games graphics and unbelievable style. That focus is not necessarily unfounded, but there is definitely more here than fancy programming or pretty graphics. Skeleton+ is a hell of a lot of fun to play.

If you've played Phantasy Star for the original Sega Master System, you have a pretty good idea of how this game's dungeons look. If you haven't, then here's what it's like: The maze is made up of individual panels. You see the floor and walls, but no roof. The walls and floor are made up of individual panels. Each panel represents one 'click' forward on the 2600 Joystick. Push forward and release: you move forward one square. Push to the right: you turn 90 degrees to the right. It probably sounds like a tedious way of moving around, and well, it is...at first. Once you get the feel of the stick down, and learn the general way in which the mazes are laid out, you'll be skipping along through the dungeon with little effort. It's unbelievable but true: the Atari 2600 Joystick is absolutely perfect for this first-person-shooter. Each press of the stick registers immediate feedback. After a time, you will find yourself in a rhythm with the stick, traversing around the maze as if you were actually chasing down each skeleton on your own two feet. It is absolutely incredible to me that Eric Ball was able to pull this off as well as he has. Just amazing.

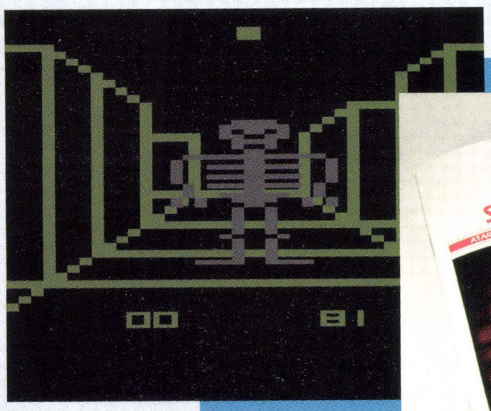
The whole point of Skeleton+ is that you are trapped in a maze filled with skeletons. Kill 40 of them (by shooting them with your 'Undead Disintegrator' via the red 'fire' button) and you free yourself from the maze. Simple, yet extremely fun. That is, no doubt, the main attribute of most classic 2600 games.

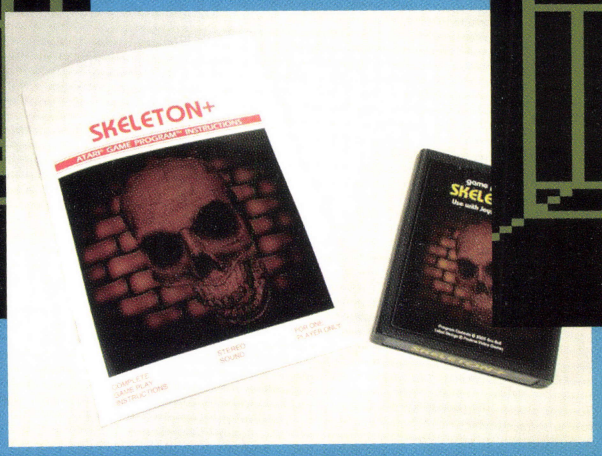
One really cool thing that occurred to me as I was playing, is that if this game was released in...say...1980, it would have undoubtedly gone down into history as a revolutionary title. People would still be talking about it today in the same way that most refer to Castle Wolfenstein 3D as the first FPS. It makes you wonder why nobody attempted it during the 2600's prime.

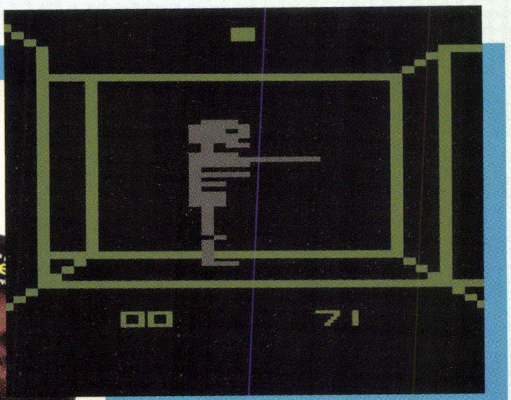
Another remarkable thing that only truly reveals itself if you shut off the onscreen motion sensor, is the spectacular use of sound to help track your targets. Not only do the skeleton footsteps grow louder or softer depending on how far away from you they are, but they also emanate from left to right, depending on where your foe is. You are essentially tracking the skeleton by sound alone, just as you would have to do in a real maze. Again, Mr. Ball, MG's hat is off to you.

To top it all off, the cartridge and manual are of extremely high quality and look exactly like official Atari releases. The only thing missing is the box. Hopefully, as RetroPublishing grows, boxes will become economically feasible.

Skeleton+ is a breakthrough game for the Atari 2600. Buy it.







Star Fire

system: Atari 2600
developer: Manuel Rotschkar
retropublisher: Xype / AtariAge
www.atariage.com
released: 2003

I remember sitting down with Star Raiders for the first time back in 1982. That's probably the first time I really felt an emotional connection with a game. When I plugged in Raiders for the first time and laid my hand on that freaking unbelievable touch-pad, something inside of me changed forever. It almost...almost...felt like I was Luke Skywalker in his X-Wing.

There was a string of these space-pilot games that came out within a year or so of each other, with Star Raiders and Star Voyager being the top of the line. Suffice to say, Star Fire would fit snuggly within those two to form the perfect Star Threesome.

It seems like designer Manuel Rotschkar took the best of the genre and then threw in a couple of nods to Star Wars before finally topping it off with a couple of features all his own. You've got radar and HUD right along with a couple of cool new features such as a laser temperature readout and enemy targets that look suspiciously like the Death Star and Slave I.

One thing in particular that really amazed me was the fact that I once again felt a little like Luke Skywalker in his X-Wing. Now, I game on the current systems too. Even the current batch of excellent Star Wars shooters for the Gamecube didn't give me the same feeling as Star Fire for the 2600 did. I'm not sure exactly why that is, but I'm guessing that it has something to do with two things: nostalgia and simplicity.

Nostalgia took hold when I could almost picture myself in front of our old floor model console TV playing this game. To me, that's part of the appeal of retrogaming anyway. It's the ability to relive a tiny part of your life over again. It only makes sense that I felt drawn to Star Fire in the same ways that I was drawn to those tremendous games of old.

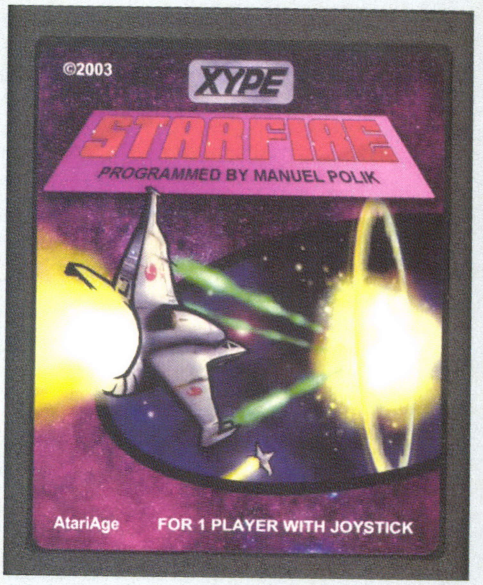
The other factor is 'simplicity.' Most Atari games feature a certain level of simplicity. Move stick to dodge, press red button to fire. The trick is to combine that simplicity with the experience as a whole. There's a lot happening on Star Fire's screen, and each piece is vital. You've got to dodge and shoot enemies while keeping an eye on your shield readout, radar (which even flickers as you take heavy damage), and laser temperature gauge. It's riveting, I tell you. Riveting! But simple. And therein lies the basic concept of game design that seems to be slipping away as we progress. You don't need 30 buttons if the game is just as compelling with one (Steel Battalion not withstanding...good Lord that game is awesome).

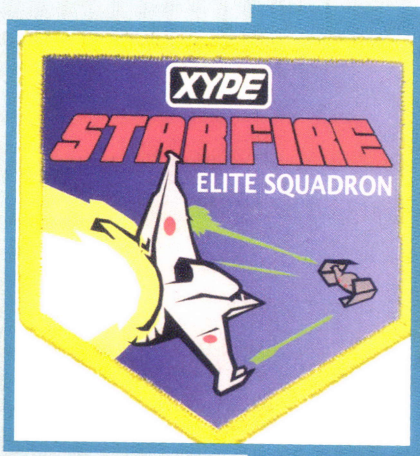
I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the great art design that has gone into this game. The ships look vaguely familiar in an...ahem..nostalgic sort of way. Explosions are nice and big and come in as many as you can fire up. Manuel uses a flicker technique to pull it all off, but there is nary the hint of slowdown.

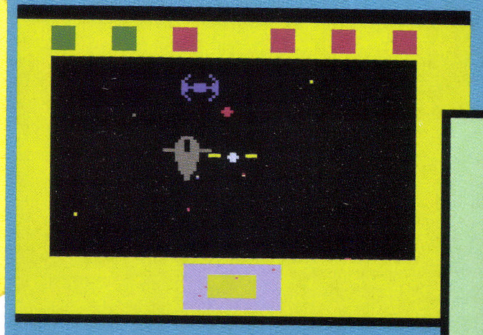
I also have to take a moment to comment on the cartridge and manual included with this game. They are both top notch and look like they are from 'official' releases. The manual even features some really nice comic-book style artwork.

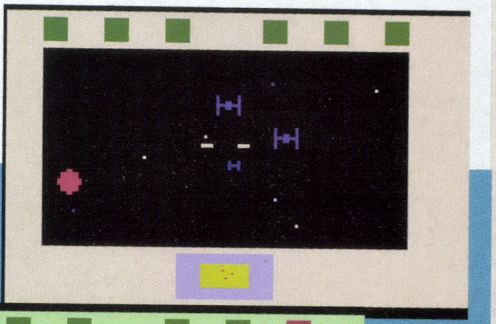
Finally (and I've saved the coolest for last), AtariAge even offers a patch in the vein of the old school Activision patches. Just score 3,500 points (no easy feat, mind you), send in a screenshot, and the patch is yours.

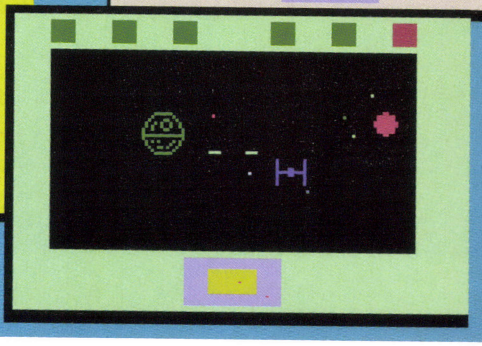
Support RetroPublishing and snatch this excellent homebrew up while you can.











Umihara Kawase

by Geoffrey Miller

I'm fairly sure that most of you have played your fair share of games. I'm also fairly sure that along the way you've found a few lesser-known gems that you felt deserved a wider audience. Maybe you were drawn into the captivating digital-comic world of Snatcher, the cinematic grandeur of Ys, or the gravity-flipping action of Metal Storm. Add Umihara Kawase for the Super Famicom to that list of lesser-known gems.

Umihara what? As a series of low profile, import-only games, it's understandable that you may not be aware of them. However, you SHOULD be aware of them-and if you ever experience their finely-tuned, addictive gameplay, you'll wish you had been aware sooner.

So, what exactly is an Umihara Kawase game like? In a nutshell, they're classic 2D sidescrollers, but highly unorthodox in style. Umihara Kawase drops the hop-n-bop mechanics of Mario and Sonic in lieu of giving the eponymous heroine nothing but a fishing rod to survive her abstract aquatic world. That's right...a fishing rod. Surprisingly, it's quite a useful tool. It can be used as a weapon, but it's also a shockingly versatile and necessary accessory for navigating the levels.

You can swing across pits, dig into the ground and jump off the edge of a platform. You can even use momentum created with the rod to launch yourself skyward. However, the most important function is its ability to be used as a grappling hook, capable of latching onto almost any surface.

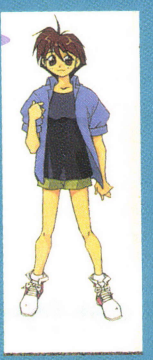
Once attached to something, the fishing line can be either slackened or tightened. This has the effect of dropping you downward or pulling you upward. Things get really interesting when you learn how to use corners as a sort of sling-shot to wrap around certain areas. All of this follows the basic dictum of great game design: easy to learn but difficult to master.

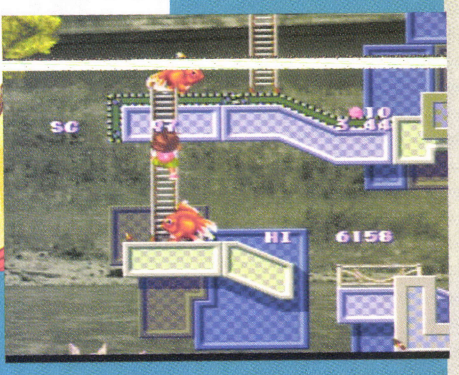
Of course, all of this would mean nothing without intriguing level design, and Umihara Kawase delivers here too. Rarely will you find a typical linear left-to-right level. Instead, "fields" (as they are called in the game) are small but open areas that often require crisscrossing both horizontally and vertically. The ultimate goal in each field is to make your way to and exit door, but it's not unusual for there to be multiple doors leading to multiple paths. Multiple paths that are filled with many challenges along the way. In addition to enemies (mostly creatures of the sea), you'll face conveyor belts, deadly spikes, moving platforms, and slippery ice (which, by the way, will reject any attempt to be latched onto by the fishing rod). These may sound like pedestrian obstacles, but later fields get downright devious in their layout.

This unique gameplay style was first unleashed on the gaming public in December 1994, when TNN released the original Umihara Kawase for the Super Famicom (Japanese version of the SNES). The game's presentation is minimal. No flashy intros here. In-game graphics and sound follow suit. The colorful sprites are well-drawn and contrast nicely with the static black and white digitized photos that constitute the backgrounds. The simple, catchy music is complemented by minimal but functional sound effects. If the presentation sounds fairly simple...well...that's because it is. It's the exquisite gameplay that steals the show in this cart.

There are around 50 fields in total (with four possible endings) packed into this little 8-megabit cartridge. The challenge level is high, but once you get sucked in, you'll be playing for hours trying to reach the proverbial "next level." This original incarnation of Umihara Kawase also includes the unique-for-the-time ability to save replays.

Three years later, a sequel, Umihara Kawase Shun, emerged on the Playstation. The most evident change in this update was its newfound audio-visual splendor. A combination of polygons with detailed and distinct hand-drawn sprites transcended the original's humble roots. The music was updated as well, with sparkling new arrange-





ments of the original themes, including two vocal songs. The game also featured a less punishing difficulty curve rendering Shun far more beginner-friendly. In 2000, a budget priced reissue, Umihara Kawase Shun: Second Edition, was released, with the only change being five added fields.

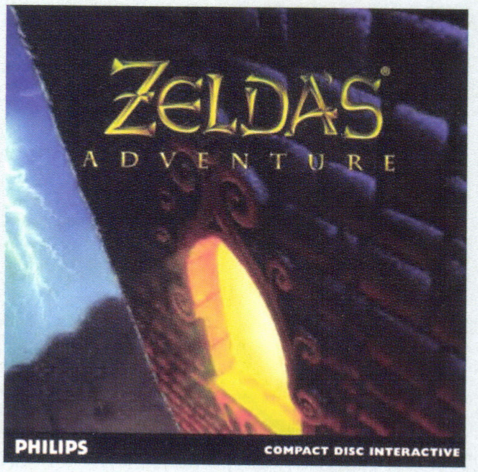
It's rare to find games as challenging, innovative, and fun as Umihara Kawase. Games like this aren't readily available at your local chain store, but they're well worth the effort to track down through eBay or your favorite import shop. For any gamer tired of all flash and no substance, Umihara Kawase is the perfect antidote.

Philips and The Lost Zelda Games

by Jim C. Combs

When you think "The Legend of Zelda," several things probably spring to mind: fun and addictive gameplay, massive worlds, in depth characters, and a phenomenal story. All of these things have been true to the series ever since the breathtaking debut of the original Legend of Zelda on the Nintendo NES way back in 1987.

Now, let's play the "Song of Time" and warp to 1991, where we discover a mysterious licensing agreement between Nintendo and Philips. This little-remembered agreement gave Philips the right to make three Zelda games for their CD-I System. The games were Link: The Faces of Evil, Zelda: The Wand of Gamelon and Zelda's Adventure. Never heard of these games? You aren't alone. To fully understand how these oddities came to be, you need to first understand how this agreement came to be.



It all starts with a slightly better known partnership that was brewing between Sony and Nintendo. Nintendo saw the Sega CD looming on the horizon and decided that they would need a similar product to compete. You have to remember that this was back in the days when Nintendo actually concerned itself with what its rivals were up to.

In April of 1991, Sony agreed to produce a CD-ROM add-on for the Super Nintendo (SNES) similar to the ones Sega had coming out for its Genesis console and Atari had in the works for its Jaguar console. A tentative release date was set in Japan for the fall of 1991, followed by a U.S. launch in the spring of 1992. The unit would retail for $700.

Sony announced plans for the CD-ROM add-on at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in January 1992. Big mistake.

Nintendo showed up at the show the very next day and announced

that the deal with Sony was off. Instead, Nintendo was going with a competing Philips based design that Nintendo felt was superior to the Sony unit. Sony was furious and called Nintendo "back stabbers," amongst other things. Sony also decided to revamp the hardware and release it as what we now know as the PlayStation. Vengeance is apparently a dish best served digitized. So, how did Philips enter the picture? Glad you asked...

Philips N.V., a large European consumer electronics conglomerate, contacted Nintendo and played "let's make a deal." They invited then Nintendo President and Vice-President, Minoru Arakawa-san and Howard Lincoln, to Philips world headquarters in Eindhoven, the Netherlands to meet with Philips executive Gaston Bastiaens, who headed up the CD-I group.

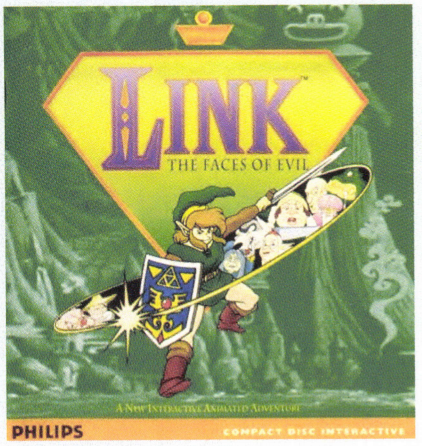
During the talks, Philips would offer their superior version of the CD-ROM add-on in return for one small caveat: All future CD-ROM based Nintendo games would also have to be playable on Philip's soon to be released CD-I System, which was due to launch in October of 1991.

Nintendo reluctantly agreed, but made it clear that they would control all licensing for Nintendo designed games and that Philips would only have rights to certain titles. This compromise also provided that Philips would benefit from Nintendo's brand-name behind their CD-I system and software. In return, Philips would provide the CD-ROM drive that would attach to the SNES.

The final "link" in this deal resulted in Philips being allowed to create a total of four licensed Nintendo games: Link The Faces of Evil, Zelda The Wand of Gamelon, Zelda's Adventure, and Hotel Mario. Now that we know a little about the history of the deal that spawned these games, let's take a look at "The Lost Zelda Games."

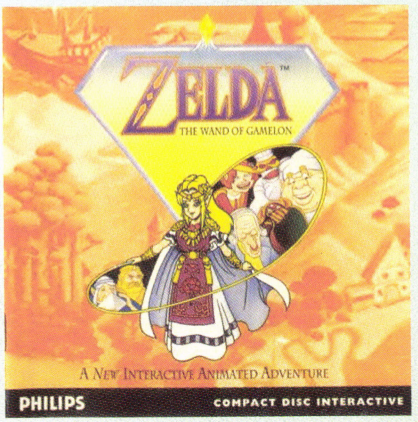
"You know something is mysterious about this whole thing when TWO Zelda games come out within 12 months of each other and nobody whispers a thing."

The first Zelda Game for the CD-I was called Link: the Faces of Evil and made its debut in 1993. This adventure features a story wherein the ever-present Ganon and his minions have invaded the peaceful island, Koridai, and kidnapped Princess Zelda. You play as Link, our hero, who discovers that he must destroy the "Faces of Evil." Link, as always, also finds time to stop Ganon's evil ways, return peace to Koridai, and rescue Princess Zelda. The game features near cartoon quality Full-Motion Animation to tell its story. Gameplay is in the side-scrolling/action-adventure vein and is very similar to Zelda II: the Adventure of Link released for the NES in 1988.



The second game, Zelda the Wand of Gamelon, also made its debut in 1993. You know something is mysterious about this whole thing when TWO Zelda games come out within 12 months of each other and nobody whispers a thing... In this adventure, Princess Zelda's father, King Harkinian, disappears while on a mission to save Gamelon. The Princess summons Link to rescue her father, but Link, like the King he was sent to rescue, also ends up missing. For the first time in the series' history, you play as Princess Zelda. The tables are turned in this adventure as Zelda finds herself tasked with the rescue of both the King and Link from Ganon's clutches. This game plays very similar to Faces of Evil.

The last Zelda title to be released for the CD-I was Zelda's Adventure, which launched in 1995. Link is once again kidnapped by Ganon, and it is up to Princess Zelda to save him. The gameplay for this title is actually very similar to the original Legend of Zelda on the NES. It even features the same top-down view that retrogamers know and love. An interesting note: Instead of animation, this game features live actors to tell the story. Of all of the Zelda games released, this one takes the top of the rarity chart. Consider yourself lucky if you can snag one.



The Legend of Zelda has come a long way since "CD-I Zelda," which all three are collectively known as. One thing that hasn't changed is that the Nintendo/Philips partnership was one of the most interesting and enigmatic licensing agreements in the history of video games.

Another thing that hasn't changed is the attitude from gamers toward these games: You either love them or hate them. Personally, I love all three. If you are a hard-core Zelda fan and are looking for a unique experience, I highly recommend you seek out these titles, especially Zelda's Adventure. Also, a very special thanks to Shigeru Miyamoto-san and Nintendo for creating this series that will live on forever in the hearts of gamers, including mine. LONG LIVE ZELDA!

Gaiares

system: Sega Genesis
lead developers: M. Yamamoto & K. Yokoa (Telenet)
publisher: Renovation Products
released: 1990
time to complete: You will never complete this game.
reviewed by: Jamie Starr

Gaiares is insanely difficult. There, I've got that out of the way. Now I'll tell you a little bit about what type of game this is. Gaiares is a standard side-scrolling shooter with a nifty feature called the "TOZ" thrown in to add some spice. The TOZ is an ancillary weapons system that tags along with your ship. It adds extra firepower to your main ship's guns, can be used as a shield, and most importantly, can be used as a boomerang that attaches to enemy ships, siphons their technology, and brings said technology back to you. In other words, you can steal your enemies' techniques.

Did I mention yet how insanely difficult this game is? There is a bevy of obstacles adding to the challenge of this game, most of which probably weren't purposeful. Did the developers actually intend for the color of the enemy bullets to be the same color as the explosions that appear when you destroy an enemy ship? It's tough to pick out what you should be dodging and what you should be celebrating.

The backgrounds add to the confusion. Some areas stand out quite well against the enemy projectiles, while others (such as a star-field) seem to hide what you need to be dodging.

Speaking of backgrounds, let's talk graphics and sound. The graphics are actually pretty good if you ignore the fact that a lot of the color choices camouflage everything you are trying to avoid. The enemy bosses are big and intimidating and take up most of the screen while still being fairly animated. Backgrounds are filled with color and feature up to five levels of parallax scrolling. No sound really stood out as being spectacular, though the sound of the laser weapon really worked my last nerve for some reason. The music was fairly repetitive and easily forgettable.

Gameplay itself is a mixed bag. Control is spot on, with three different levels of maneuvering speed available. There are a bunch of available weapons for the taking (just TOZ an enemy ship) though you will probably only rely on one or two of them to get you through the game. One big problem is that there just seems to be too much going on in too small of an area at any given time. There are sections of this game that seem almost impossible to get through.

When this game was released it garnered fairly high critical praise. I'd say the average was somewhere around a solid B on our scale. It's hard for me to believe that this game got those scores. Playing a game is supposed to be fun. Not an exercise in futility. I understand that shooters are supposed to be a challenge, but this game is ridiculous. If you crave difficult shooters, add two grades to my verdict.

Final Score: D

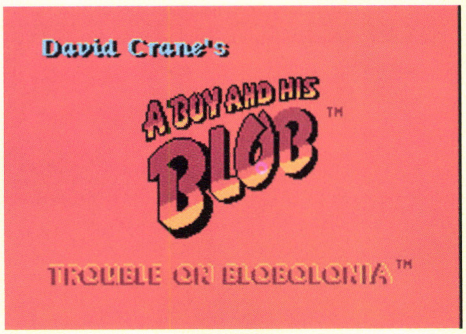
A Boy and His Blob

system: Nintendo Entertainment System (NES)
lead developers: David Crane
publisher: Absolute
released: 1989
reviewed by: Jaysen Mercer

Do you remember that girl (or guy) you dated in high school who was just fantastic looking, but sunk about three notches down when she (or he) opened her (or his...ahem) mouth? Well, that's what A Boy and His Blob reminded me of.

I fired up the old NES looking forward to some more Crane mastery. I was immediately slapped in the face by what has got to be one of the most offending title screens in the history of videogames. This thing was ugly. Like hung over and hanging onto the toilet the night after the Manci Games launch party ugly. But I figured, eh, who cares? It's just the title screen. So, I obeyed its command to "Press Start Button," and the show was on.

This game does indeed involve a Boy (whom you control directly), his Blob (whom you control indirectly) and lots of jellybeans (used to control said Blob) and is broken up into two main sections. The first section finds our heroes collecting lost treasure back on good old Earth. The initial part of this section takes place against a pretty cool looking "nighttime city on the lake" background. The sad thing is that this only takes up about 30 seconds of gameplay. Most of the rest of the game is spent underground traipsing around "lost caverns" or "lost factories" collecting gems and treasure.



The Boy can get the Blob to transform into various items (ladders, holes in the ground, a hummingbird, etc.) that you will find useful in your quest for riches. Need a ladder? Feed the Blob a licorice jellybean. How about a hole in the ground? Feed the Blob a punch jellybean. It's a pretty neat system that adds a good puzzle element to the game.

As I began to catch on to the nuances of the puzzle elements, I also began to have more fun. All that changed about 30 minutes or so into the game when I started to notice that things were looking a little "blah" graphics-wise.

Okay, I admit it. I'm a graphics whore. Who doesn't love good graphics? People stand on their soapboxes pontificating about how gameplay matters so much more than graphics. You know what? They are right. But can I ask you something? Who wants to play a great game that looks like something a cat puked up on a throw rug? Nobody. That's who.

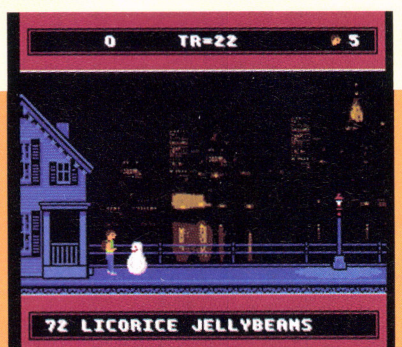
Don't get me wrong. The Boy isn't THAT ugly. It's just that I expect a lot more for a NES game released in 1989. We had Super Mario Brothers 2 and Metroid by then. Ya dig?

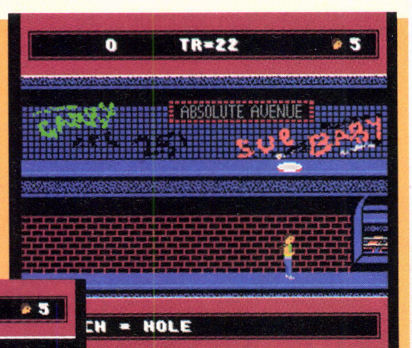
Things got a little better during the second section of the game, which takes place back on Blobolonia (wasn't she in Purple Rain?). At least we get actual "art." Things like trees, grass, boiling chocolate, and corn actually look decent throughout the Blobolonia sections.

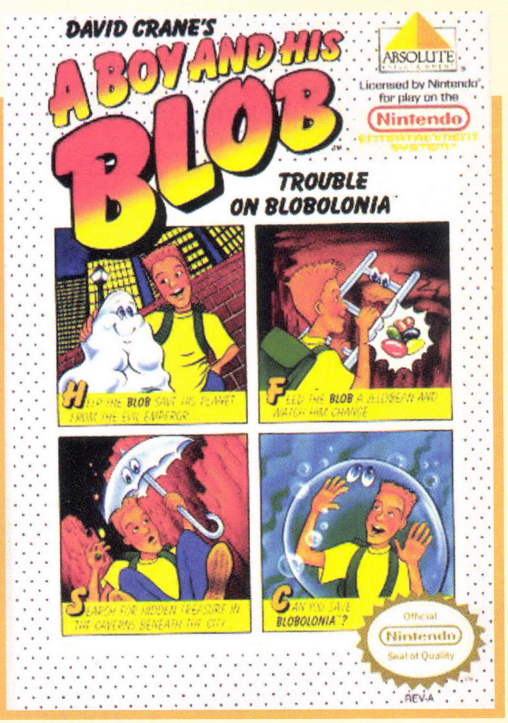
The second act of the game also introduces the need for the Boy to use some new jellybeans on his Blob friend. You actually will find a use for the coconut! Rejoice! When all is said and done however, the gameplay mechanics (and the music!) are mostly unchanged from the first section.

Just like that girl (or guy...) from high school, A Boy and His Blob deserves a kiss at the end of the night. But only a kiss.

Final Score: C+






DAVID CRANE'S
A BOY AND HIS BLOB
TROUBLE ON BLOBOLONIA
ABSOLUTE
Licensed by Nintendo for play on the Nintendo
Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

Rastan

system: Sega Master System
publisher: Sega
released: 1988
reviewed by: Michael Belmont

Ah, Rastan...yields so many fond memories. I can remember sneaking my way into the arcade at the ripe old age of about 12 or 13 and just standing there...completely in awe of the game. Eventually, I'd bravely pop in a quarter and start slapping those buttons like a wild man. Of course, slapping buttons got me all the way to about the first bit where I had to jump the lake. At that point, I wasn't really slapping the buttons. They were slapping me. Fast forward to now....

I've experienced the concept of simple side-scrolling many times now and even mastered it to a certain extent. With past experiences under my belt, I came back once again to "take the lake" in Taito's conversion of Rastan for the Sega Master System.

The first thing you'll notice about the conversion is that it's more than just a bit scaled down. Don't let that scare you though, Taito has done an excellent job of fitting the game onto the cart, getting it to run smoothly and managing to make it so very true to the arcade version. The levels and characters still retain their original appearances, and the SMS's sound chip does a great job of recreating the inspiring "Rastan theme," the ever-ambient castle music, and sound effects.

As for the control, it's damn smooth. Everything you want to happen, happens immediately and with little effort. The Barbarian can perform a number of enemy-carving moves and acrobatics that'll help you destroy the mutant hordes and make your way through each stage.

For old school hack-and-slash adventure, nothing beats Rastan. It's a mandatory gaming experience that everyone should have, and more importantly, love. It's next to impossible to find it in a good arcade (or even a bad arcade) nowadays, so take heart in knowing that Taito has you covered with this amazing home conversion of the coin-op.

Final Score: A

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Ninja Spirit

system: TurboGrafx-16
developers: Irem
publisher: NEC
released: 1990
reviewed by: Jaysen Mercer

Wow, I had no idea how bad I was jonesing for a good ninja side-scroller. I think the last one I played was Shinobi on the Sega Saturn back in '96 or so. Maybe I had forgotten about what these games were like. I dunno. Whatever the case, I was extremely surprised and impressed with how much fun playing Ninja Spirit was. My hands were sweaty. My teeth ground. My lips grinned. And now I'll explain why...

Seems like a lot of the action games on the current systems end up being either disturbingly difficult (Devil May Cry), or disturbingly easy (irony of ironies, Devil May Cry 2). It seems like the developers have almost lost the knack for creating enjoyable but challenging games. Ninja Spirit is dead-on perfect in this aspect. It utilizes what we used to like to call "a learning curve." It's a simple concept really:

The game starts out easy enough. Cruise to the right. Swing your sword. Collect weapon power ups. Collect Ninja Spirits (ghost ninjas who mimic your every move). Blow up enemies. Maybe even jump here and there. Face the easy (but fun) first boss. Move on to second stage.

Now on the second stage, things begin to get a little more interesting. You face more simultaneous attacks. The stage boss takes a little bit of jumping skills.

By the third stage, you are trying different weapons out because your standard sword isn't working as well as it did in the first stage anymore. You discover that bombs can kill almost instantly, and a fully powered-up shuriken (along with two Ninja Spirit upgrades) can kick major ass.

And so on, all the way through the final seventh stage. It's almost a perfect learning curve. Other designers should study this game to find out what makes a game challenging without become overly frustrating. Well, except for that insane ninja-dodging-freefall that consumes the second half of the last stage (Stage 7). The entire section consists of your ninja falling straight down, dodging evil one-hit ninjas-and...you are falling way to fast to dodge any of them. This is the only insanely frustrating part of the game. Here's a hint: Fall off the cliff and move left. You can catch a "safe zone" about one character's width away from the wall.

This game's got a lot of other things going for it besides its learning curve. The TurboGrafx is showing off some sweet stuff here. Screens filled with projectiles, enemies, and giant bosses are a common sight. Granted, these projectiles and enemies aren't made up of the most detailed sprites in the world, but the tradeoff is that there's a lot of 'em. It's an instance where the graphics justifiably suffer in order to make the gameplay that much better.

Couple the pyrotechnic-like graphics with a winning soundtrack and you've got a ninja game that is even better than (gasp!) the original Shinobi.

If there is one thing I can fault NEC (or Irem...not sure who made this decision) for, it has to be the unlimited continues. Why bother mastering techniques when I can just jam on the "Run" button and continue pretty much from where I left off? Maybe its not such a bad decision, considering another mode of play (called "Arcade") is also included. In this mode, you get ONE power bar instead of five. That means "one hit deaths," my friends. And that translates into a much more challenging game, unlimited continues be damned.

So, pick your poison. If you like it easier, go the "PC-Engine" route. If you like it tougher, go the "Arcade" route. Either way, you are in for an enjoyable experience. Just keep in mind that this is an arcade translation, and as such, isn't the longest game in the world either way.

Final Score: B

Pitfall!

system: Atari 2600
lead developer: David Crane
publisher: Activision
released: 1982
reviewed by: Jaysen Mercer

There's no getting around the fact that Pitfall was (and still is) a landmark game. So, how do you review a game that has gone down into history as changing the way games were played forever?

You begin by turning it on. If you are used to playing nothing but contemporary games, you will be shocked from the moment you flip the power switch. There are no loading screens. Hell, there isn't even a title screen! It's just Harry staring vacantly at two things: A hole in the ground and a log. I sat there for a couple seconds wondering what to do. Then I remembered, you just run! So, I pushed right on the joystick, and away we went. The timer began its countdown from 20:00 and I began my trip into the jungle.

The ultimate goal is to attain the perfect score of 114,000. This is accomplished by grabbing gold bars, silver bars, money bags, and diamond rings while running through various screens and jumping (or swinging over) the myriad pitfalls before the 20 minute time limit is up. However, only the best players are able to obtain that prized maximum score, so a more immediate goal becomes trying to beat your old high score.

I ran right a few times before I realized that running right is probably the single worst thing you can do in this game. You are constantly calculating precise jumps over logs that are whizzing toward Harry at a relentless pace. After quite a few beatdowns, I went against instinct and turned left...and that's when everything changed.

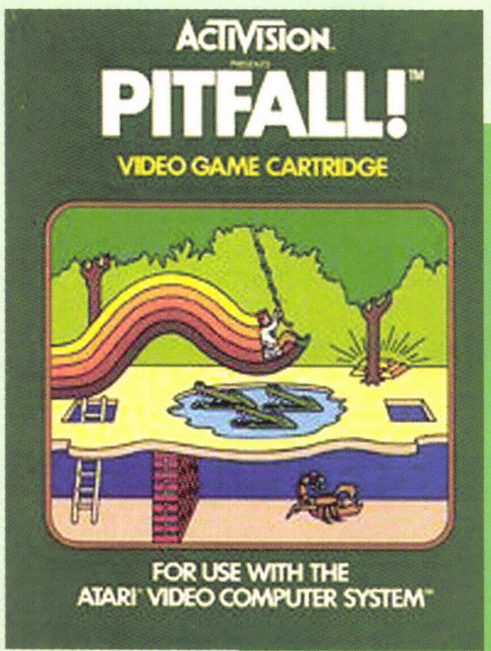
Pitfall transformed itself from a precision jumping game into pure nirvana. Sure, your success still depends on the accuracy of your jumps, but an even bigger factor becomes timing (or lack thereof). By running left, you end up running with the logs rather than against them. Sometimes they are in front of you. Sometimes they are behind you. And most of the time, you don't need to jump them unless they are standing still.

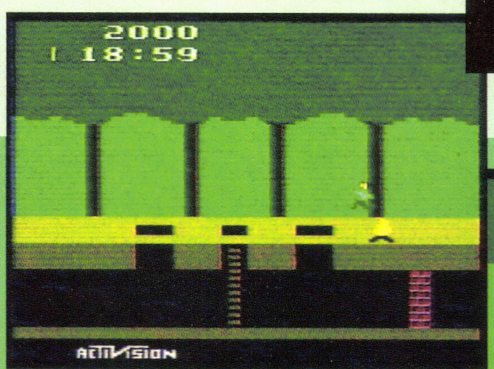
At this point you begin to understand that it is indeed possible to get that timer down below 15:00. Without the constant distraction of jumping those crazy rolling logs, your mind enters into a zen-like state that enables you to time your obstacle jumps perfectly. To make the snap decision to wait for the vine or make a jump for it. To run across that strange disappearing lake or wait. It's pure gaming bliss, and something that I'm not used to in a platform type of game.

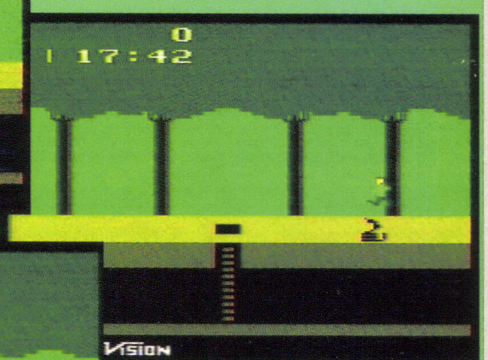
Another thing that struck me was what has to be one of the earliest uses of obvious enemy A.I. in a videogame. The dreaded scorpion actually follows your every move. That darn critter will come at you if he sees you. He'll switch directions when you are in mid-jump. And he'll even track your footsteps if you are above him. I still remember what a big deal it was when fighting games finally enabled the contestants' heads to track each other. It's amazing that this scorpion is essentially doing the same thing, just 10 years earlier.

When we first decided to review Pitfall!, I was a little nervous. I was nervous because this game seems to hold such a sacred place in many gamers' hearts. What if it really sucked after all of these years? I was also nervous because we have an interview with David Crane, the designer of Pitfall!, in this very issue. What if we interview him on one page, and give his classic game a crap review on another? It turns out that those fears were unfounded. Once a classic, always a classic. At least in this case.

Final Score: A







Donkey Kong Country

system: Super Nintendo
developer: Rare
publisher: Nintendo
released: 1994
reviewed by: Jaysen Mercer

"C'mon, C'mon... Do the Donkey Kong!" If you were a product of the 80's, chances are that you also probably heard the old Buckner and Garcia song, "Pac-Man Fever." What some of you never knew (or have forgotten after all these long years) is that there was actually an entire album of these kinds of songs. If you owned that album, you probably remember that first line.

That line was on infinite repeat as I played through Donkey Kong Country. As maddening as that may sound, parts of DKC were even more-so. Did I hear someone say "mine-cart level?" Oh, did you just say, "cannons?" I'm sure anyone who has played this game has their own version of my own nightmare level. For me, it was definitely those inane cannons. And therein lies the problem with DKC: frustrating levels.

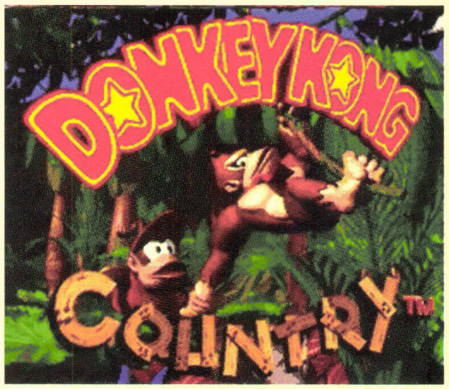
I've talked about difficulty curves in other RetroReviews, so you know it's a pretty important thing to me. For some reason, I didn't remember this game as being so full of these frustrating moments. Is it the rose-colored glasses of nostalgia? Or maybe I'm just older and not as fast as my young and nimble fingers used to be.

Don't get me wrong, the Kong is still barrels of fun to play. Keep in mind that 1994 was a year filled with fantastic SNES games. We had Breath of Fire, Earthworm Jim, Final Fantasy III, Mortal Kombat II, and Uniracers just to mention a few. Donkey Kong Country fit squarely into this upper echelon of 1994 releases, and may have actually been the best game released in all of that year, at least in terms of the way it shook the industry down to it's mighty foundation.

You see, DKC was the first game to use something that Nintendo called, 'Advanced Computer Modeling' (ACM). What is ACM? Glad you asked. ACM is just a fancy way of saying, 'We rendered everything on super-duper Silicon Graphics Workstations, and then transferred the models into our nifty little SNES game.' The effect works great and provided what many say were the best graphics ever produced on a console game up until that time. I've gotta admit, even 10 years later, those graphics look amazing.

The problem with a game having graphics this good is that people have actually been known to be BLINDED by the graphics! That's right! Literally BLINDED! How else can you explain DKC receiving all 9's and 10's upon it's release? Like I said, Kong is fun to play, but it's not THAT fun to play. Probably the greatest appeal of the game is in seeing what visual treat the next level holds. God knows that's the only reason I continued playing past that first cannon level.

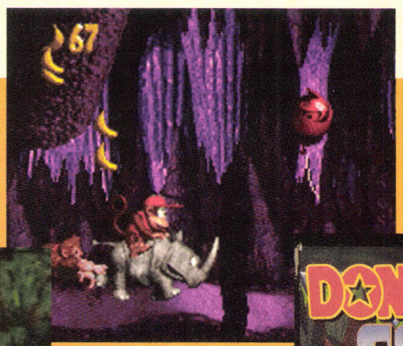
There's no doubt that DKC was a



groundbreaking title. It ushered in an era of new graphics capabilities that helped the SNES compete for a couple of years right alongside the PSOne. But, truth be told, the game is nowhere near groundbreaking in terms of it's gameplay. We've seen most of it's tricks before. Granted, it pulls these tricks off well (except for the questionable platform jumping elements), but we've still seen it all before.

Should you track down DKC and try it out again for the first time in a long time? Probably. If only to see how well these graphics hold up after 10 years. It really is amazing. Just don't go expecting the best gaming experience of your life (as some mags would have had you believe), and you'll be okay.

Final Score: B-



Garou - Mark of the Wolves

system: Neo-Geo
developer: SNK
publisher: SNK
released: 1999
reviewed by: Ken Pyle

As Street Figher 3 was entering its third iteration in 1999, SNK rather boldly released the latest (and perhaps last) entry into the Garou Densetsu series: Garou - Mark of the Wolves for the aging SNK MVS arcade board. The MVS hardware had at last been surpassed by Capcom's CPS-3 board, effectively tarnishing what was left of SNK's gold in the hardware department.

'Bold?' you ask. 'Why?' you wonder. For one, Garou tossed many of the defining characteristics of the Garou Densetsu series out. No more back and forth line dancing like a drunken cowboy; all but one of the characters in the series are gone; and the graphics became more "gritty." The first four Garou titles were very colorful, yet typical of the multitude of 2D fighters at the time. The next three titles in the Garou series were the Real Bout games, which went for a more anime-like look and much faster-paced gameplay. Many of the elements of the series remained, but the dial was turned up to 11.

With Garou, SNK broke the mold. They wisely took a good long look at SF3 and realized what you, the fan, wanted. It shuns the glitzy look of the other 2D fighters of the time and uses the capabilities of the Neo-Geo better than any other title on the system.

Under the hood, this engine still purrs, baby. Four years later and it remains the finely balanced, fast-paced

and technical fighter it was when it was released. My grandfather is fond of saying, "You can polish a turd all you want, but it's always going to be a turd." Most 2D fighters from days of yore suffered from this apparent misunderstanding. When they came out, all of the little gadgets and so called 'innovations' haphazardly thrown in for the quest for identity made them look cool, but years later these same things make you realize that old grandpa knew what he was talking about. Garou is not one of those 2D fighters.

Most notable of the many facets of this game is the T.O.P. (Tactical Offensive Position) system: You assign a third of your life-bar to the T.O.P. It's up to you which third you assign it too: The first, second, or last third. When your remaining life is in this area you receive the dual benefits of health regeneration and powered-up attacks.

Another great element of this game is that the Super-Attacks are built for balance and not flash. Too many fighters give you eye-candy supers with little practicality. Not a single move is wasted in this game. A great example of this is Terry Bogard's supers. His Buster Wolf is beautiful, understated, and...deadly, while his Power Geyser is your 'anti-air' friend. The Power Geyser's true beauty is revealed when you pull it off up close: The attack is so devastating that you can actually drop the controller and dance like an idiot around your living room while your roommate angrily decides where exactly he is going to hide the bathroom cam and which site he'll be hosting the pictures on.

The final facet that deserves a mention is the 'Just Defend' system, which is just parrying with a unique name. Tapping 'back' at the last moment parries the move your opponent just unleashed and allows you precisely enough time to punish their mistake.

These are only three of the many system features, yet they give a good example of why Garou-MotW blows away the competition. As much as I love this game, I will openly concede that the one-player experience...stinks. It's not even remotely challenging, but it IS repetitive and boring. Bottom line: You don't play Garou for the single player experience.

You may be wondering at this point, "Well, how does it look?" Simply put, Neo-Geo graphics for the uninitiated are the sort of thing that grows on you. If you're a 2D aficionado with an appreciation for the fine graphical work that can be done on a near 15-year old system, this will make you drool. You'd be hard pressed to find a game on the current-gen systems that is this well done. The only real problem I have graphics-wise is with the color palette. It's a bit washed out. That's not saying it looks bad. Far from it! It's just this game's lone (but, minor) flaw.

Garou-MotW is a must-buy for anyone who enjoys fighting games. It's easy to pick up and play, but still offers the steep learning curve and deep gameplay needed to keep you hooked. The MVS version can be had for around $60, the AES version will run you between $300 and $400. If you're not crazy about paying that much for a Neo-Geo game, an excellent port was done for the Dreamcast which can be had for $20 or less.

I don't normally say this about Neo-Geo games in this price range, but it is worth EVERY penny. Get your buddies together and play for a few hours. You'll see why.

Final Score: B

Gamer's Life

Tangential Thinking By Chris "Tangential" Seguin

Why is it when I finally have a brilliant idea for some great invention that will shock the world ("IT" was my idea way before that stupid inventor guy ever made one), I somehow manage to lose whatever brilliant idea I had because my brain starts floating off in some other direction. Huh? Where am I going with this?

Oh yeah. That crazy invention. Anyway, being a gamer has produced in me a sort of "tangential" style of thinking. I can go on tangents during just about any conversation and derail my train of thought like that one time at band-camp when...okay, again, sorry for that. In fact, as I was writing this particular commentary, I managed to start and nearly complete two other projects before I made it back to this one. What was the point of all of that, other than to meet some supposed publishing deadline? The point was to discuss how the old Atari 2600 game called Pac-Man induces tangential thinking.

What? How can Pac-Man create a tangential style of thinking? Because it was such mind-numbing repetitive drivel that one could feasibly play round after round and not do anything different. By the time I had mastered Pac-Man, I could nearly do an entire board with my eyes closed (at least while the ghosts were still slow). This allowed the ultimate opportunity for my mind to wander. I could think about girls. I could think about the homework that I had failed to finish. I could think about girls again.

I distinctly remember the last time I played Pac-Man. I was so fed up with doing the same thing over and over and over again that I just gave up. I stopped using the control stick. Pac-Man just sat there waiting for some mechanical ghost to run over him. And he waited, and waited, and waited. I had discovered a spot where Blinky and the gang seemed to forget about trying to throttle me. So I yanked the damn cartridge out of the system (the penultimate Atari sin) and threw it away. My mom promptly dug it out of the trash and whooped my ass (in the game, not in real life). It didn't matter, I still needed something more challenging.

The only problem was that all of the Atari games were the same way. Yars Revenge was another one of those mindless repetition games that got incredibly boring after just a short while. But for some reason I played that one quite regularly. But couldn't the designers at Atari actually make something that was still as fun the hundredth time as it was the first time?

> **"So I yanked the damn cartridge out of the system (the penultimate Atari sin) and threw it away!"**

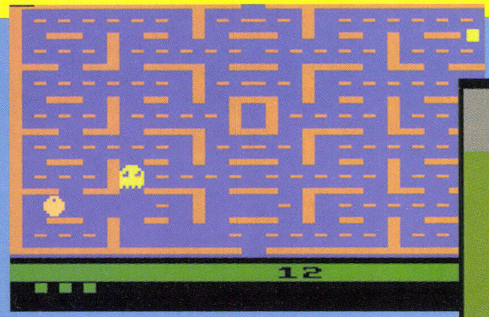
Of course they did - it was called Activision. Only they weren't Atari. That was David Crane. Yes, Pitfall was repetitive, probably more-so than Pac-Man. The treasure was always in the same spots. The alligators all chomped in unison. The barrels all rolled at the same speed. And every scorpion was slower than molasses running uphill in January. But it was fun. Even after I beat that game (got all the treasure with 4 seconds to spare), I played it again. I never did finish the game again after many tries, but it was brilliant fun nonetheless.

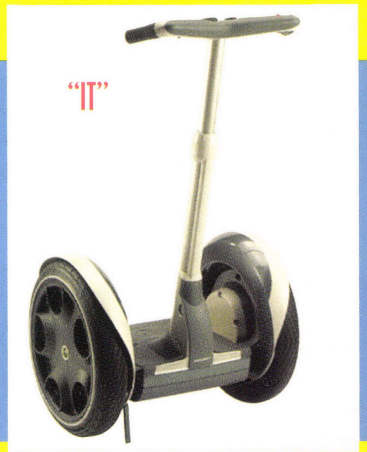
I think of River Raid. Again, the same patterns over and over again. But still fun. I sucked at that one, big time. Never did make it very far anytime that I played, but just the idea of blowing up bridges (thus creating the first ever "auto save" feature) was a blast.

Speaking of blast and Activision in the same thought process (again, a tangential style of thought) leads me to Kaboom!. Kaboom! Need I say more? And what was it with the goofy glasses that guy wore? (uh, it's a bandit's mask -ed.) Anyway, I think that single game was the cause for me to have to buy another paddle set because my first ones actually broke from the constant turning.

Speaking of which, I broke three joysticks playing Decathalon. After not playing the system for over 10 years, and returning to visit the hallowed system in its final resting place in my mom's basement (a topic for another day, probably for a magazine for mentally deranged spinsters), I found one of the old Decathalon joysticks (which I knew was for Decathalon because I had marked it as such). This thing had about seven wraps of electrical tape keeping each side firmly pressed against the contacts so that the constant back and forth motion of running the "mile" would register quicker. Is that cheating? Another topic for another day, I think.

Anyway, my point is...what was my point? Oh, yes, my point is, Atari allowed me to hone my skills in tangential thinking processes. Some of the games were so boring and repetitive that to think about other things was the only way to remain sane. But it was my Atari, my games, and my time that I spent. And I am better for it.



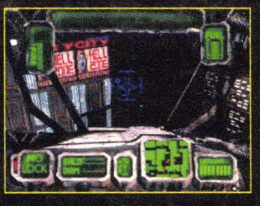


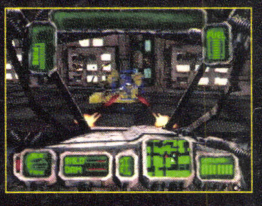
DON'T FORGET TO FEED THE CATS

SKYHAMMER

In the mid-21st century, power-hungry corporations rule the streets of the largest cities. You have been employed by Cytox as a Skyhammer pilot to protect its corporate investments. You will undertake a wide variety of missions to prove your ability and ensure long-term revenues for Cytox.

Skyhammer was developed exclusively for the Atari Jaguar by famed Jaguar and PC developer Rebellion. The game features full-freedom 3D motion, three massive cities to explore, dozens of nonlinear missions that allow you to achieve objectives and repair your craft as needed, and enough missiles, countermeasures, and bombs to repel any foe.



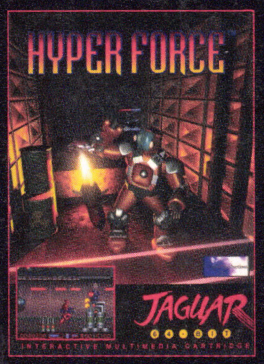


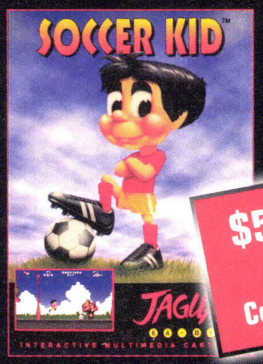
PROTECTOR: SE

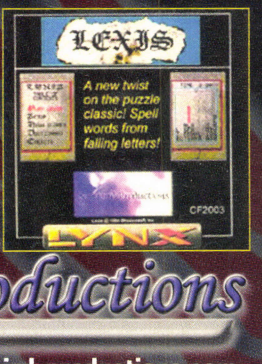
A swarm of ravenuos alien ships has descended upon us. All-out war has resulted in a desperate fight to save humanity. Meanwhile, the poor inhabitants of the orbiting planetoid known as Haven-7 are left on their own, with only one ship spared for their defense. You must repel the invaders and protect the inhabitants of Haven-7!

Protector: Special Edition, the incredible sequel to the popular Protector game for the Atari Jaguar, is a fast-paced, blast-filled bi-directional shooter, featuring 40 waves of heart-stopping action, digitally sampled audio, 3D rendered graphics, deadly boss ships, and more.

Don't miss these other great Jaguar & Lynx games from Songbird Productions:







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